



RARE TEARSHEETS & PHOTOS BY KISHOR PAREKH, THE REVOLUTIONARY OF INDIAN PHOTOJOURNALISM

November 2015 • Rs. 150  
(Total 148 pages)

[www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in)

# Better Photography

Better Technique. Better Insight. Better Pictures

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## EXCLUSIVE TESTS

Sigma dp0 Quattro

Sigma 24–35mm f/2 Art

Tamron 35mm f/1.8 Di VC

**INSIDE**  
AN EXCLUSIVE MAGAZINE ON THE ART OF  
CELLPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY



## LISTEN TO THE FINEST OF AFTER DARK STORIES

12 distinct voices bare their hearts & share their insights on building nuanced narratives

### PHOTOFEATURE

A husband's sensitive portrayal of his wife's difficult childbirth

### CELLPHONE PROFILE

Storytelling in the Instagram age in Chandan Khanna's view

### ON ASSIGNMENT

Shooting sublime conceptual images through self portraits

### PROFILE

Darren Pearson on creating incredible sketches with light

Network

**18**

## EDITORIAL

**“It presents itself quietly, by simply existing somewhere in the fringes of our consciousness.”**



## The Joys of the Small Print

A picture in a wallet. Almost forgotten... but not quite. Cleaned out the wallet recently, transferred the picture to new one with a better plastic window. On second thought, decided to preserve it separately. An old passport photo rescued from an ID my wife had thrown out years ago. She looks like a kid in there. Grandfather, on a windowsill, ornately framed. He was 91 when that photo was taken. He joked about running in the next marathon. He smiled very often. He had a strange smile on his face when he slipped away at 96, as though he were meeting a secret lover. Nigel Bruno Dcunha was 34. My closest friend. Brothers in arms. We had gone for the Mark Knopfler concert together in 2005, and talked another fan into letting us have a lifesize cutout of the rock legend that he had just stolen. In coat and tie, Nigel grins cheekily out of a narrow prayer card in a plastic box, where I keep my best headphones.

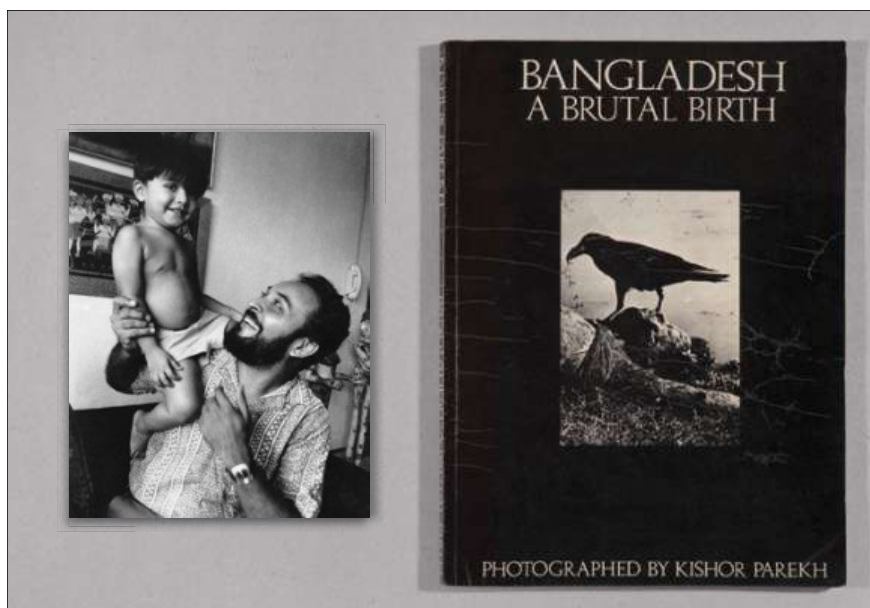
A wall full of family photos, mostly made by my Dad. Guests never fail to say something about those pictures, whether they know the people in the frames or not. My Dad keeps changing the photos frequently, except for two, which have been around for over six months now. Relegated to a corner, I also know they are his favourites. One of them is titled *5 min after dear granddaughter's arrival*. It shows Mom beaming right into the camera without really seeing it.

Meeting over coffee, Swapan Parekh pulls a cardboard box from his satchel. In the box, memories of his father... his Dad's book. Over the book, a sheet of tracing paper. On that, a pair of white cotton gloves. He opens the book carefully. Just a glimpse. Gravure printed, the photographs are spectacular. The captions, in his father's words, eloquent in their simplicity. Swapan invites me to hold the book, see it. My palms are greasy from the October heat outside. I refuse. Right there, I cannot decide if I am more moved by Kishor Parekh's photography or by Swapan's obvious love for his Dad.

The print, in whatever form, is a gift. It presents itself quietly, by simply existing somewhere in the fringes of our consciousness. As useful as cellphones and computer screens are, they just cannot do the same thing as the smallest, plainest print.

*Kishor Parekh*

**K Madhavan Pillai**  
editor@betterphotography.in



### (left) Kishor Parekh with his son Swapan

“If I cannot record the significant deepness of the human race through my camera, what is the use of my medium?” Kishor Parekh’s poignant words are a testimony to his restless, indomitable spirit that changed the face of Indian photojournalism in the sixties. Parekh’s iconic Bangladesh work has been painstakingly restored by his son Swapan, and will be on view at Delhi Photo Festival 2015, where one would even be able to see a reproduction of this rare book.

**To read more about Parekh’s towering influence on news photography in India**  
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Anant Athavale, Rahul Mankar

## Subscription Team

Kamlesh Mathakar, Vaibhav Ghavale: 9324490187

## Logistics

Anant Shirke

## NEWSSTAND & SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

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## HEAD OFFICE

Network18 Media & Investments Ltd,

"One Indiabulls Centre" Unit No. 501, 5th floor,

Tower-I Jupiter Textile Mills, Senapati Bapat

Marg, Elphinstone Road, Mumbai-400 016,

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- For Reader's Tip and Your Pictures contests, include a 100-word note on how and why you shot the image
- Winners of all the contests get featured on our website and can be featured in the magazine too. They will also receive special prizes!

### Send in a synopsis, with low-resolution images for viewing, to contribute articles to the following sections:

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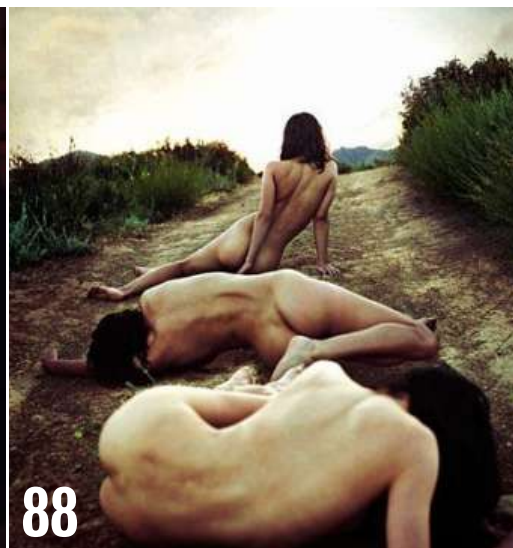
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# Better Photography

Our ever curious and passionate love affair with the camera will never cease. And so be it as Better Photography, India's first magazine completely devoted to the art and science of photography presents an expansive imagery like no other can. It is also the best-selling photography magazine in India and South Asia.

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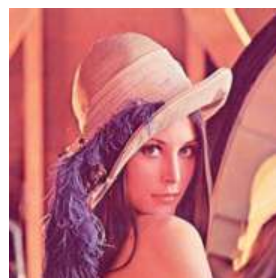
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**"All it takes is one distorted image to flare tensions to a tipping point."**



Image source: The Independent

## Shame on You, Social Media

By the time a viral social media post is exposed to be a hoax, it will have done its part in fueling tensions. Some of the images accompanying such posts are obviously manipulated or misrepresented. While it is sickening enough that certain individuals and/or organisations will stoop to any level to further their agendas, it is also astonishing to witness the number of followers who join the bandwagon with much fervor without so much as a customary verification of their veracity.

The ISIS flag hoax is not even a relatively new occurrence. A well-known television channel had committed a similar faux pas some weeks ago. The use of such tactics to spread divisive attitudes among the people is recording an alarming trend, especially in our country. Given our history with polarised attitudes and the impact of propaganda, it's chilling to imagine a situation where all it takes is one distorted image to flare tensions to a tipping point.

**Advait Bapat, Mumbai, via email.**

## As Old as the Cameraphone

Having grown up in the 90s, I've witnessed every phase of the cellphone boom. Perceptions of time become distorted when I try to picture an era when the cellphone camera was not such an integral part of our lives as it is today. I even look at my childhood photographs and realise that almost all of them have been shot on film. I remember how we would wait for at least two or three days to see them, and how

➤ This image, purportedly of refugees in Europe waving the ISIS flag, was revealed to be fake.

➤ Advertisement for the Kodak 35mm film rangefinder camera, circa 1940.

the final appearance depended on the photographer's expertise.

I would like to think that the cellphone camera slipped into my life just as unobtrusively as growing up had. Now we have all the time in the world to pose, and yet we have to cope up with photography taking over our social, personal and professional lives. Images can be stored and shared with much ease than ever before, and yet our attachment with sharing our moments has become much more important than cherishing them. Perhaps, witnessing the cellphone boom is quite similar to coming of age.

**Vishnu Rajeev, Kochi, via email**

## Camera Ads, Then and Now

Recently, I was watching a series of TV commercials from the last 60 years. While today's endorsements make use of impressive graphic imagery combined with marketing tactics, advertisements of yonder had to rely on the photographer to make an imposing presentation to the viewer. For Instance, demonstrating one's product in comparison to that of the competitors' was one of the first notable fads in advertising. It is interesting to note that most of them featured three competitors, and the photographer had to strive to capture all the four products, as well as their presenters, in a single frame!

Speaking of photographers, I wonder why camera companies have stayed away from mainstream advertising. Camera ads of the old days presented a human side to the act of taking pictures, one that yearns





## Portrait of a Toddler

If a picture speaks a thousand words, the photograph of Aylan Kurdi lying lifeless in a beach suffices to prove that they are often not enough. In no particular order of my interest, the image has provoked several insightful as well as uninformed debates, statements by politicians, internet memes—it was even featured in the latest of Charlie Hebdo's rather incensing cartoons. The very fact that it takes such a mind-numbing, spirit-crushing image to draw our attention to one of the biggest humanitarian crises of our times is but a sad reflection of our times.

It also goes on to say a lot about the attention span of the internet. Consider this—most of the refugees currently living under dire, debilitating

conditions probably have no access to this viral phenomenon, while we who get to read about and witness stories of forced migration, only talk about it when we are momentarily shocked out of what we like to call our 'collective conscience'.

The panel that accompanied the editorial in the last issue of *Better Photography* seemed to me to be a reminder of the same. Whether it was intentional or otherwise, the use of a blank panel instead of the photograph helped turn my mind away from all the hatred, mistrust and disillusionment. Like a tombstone, it sums up the entire incident. The boy is likely to be forgotten, but is finally at rest.

**Janhabi Mukherjee, Kolkata, via email**



We believe that the joy of a family photo is in displaying it. To make your special memories stand out, this **Letter of the Month** wins a special Photo Frame from Red Moments!



## "Advertisements of yonder had to rely on the photographer to make an imposing presentation to the viewer."

to preserve impressive sights as well as endearing memories. My observation is that the function of the camera doesn't need marketing anymore; it is the brand value and specific requirements that bring the user to the product, and not the other way round.

**Vasu Malhotra, New Delhi, via email**

## To See is to Believe

Supriya Joshi's editorial in the October 2015 issue of *Better Photography* was accompanied by three very interesting quotes by photographers on the process of shooting images. I found myself in yet another brown study about an age-old question. What drives an artist to finally make that leap? All three quotes point out that the most important thing there is, is to see. Whether one is in the grasp of all-consuming philosophy or unanswered questions, one's surroundings often tend to reflect one's moods.

Photography, I believe, then becomes the process of embracing one's personality. Once one has chosen a theme to shoot about, relating to it is the next in the process; how else is one supposed to find it in the vast, vast world around oneself?

**Vaibhav Das, Bhubaneswar, via email**

## Beauty and the Beast

The appeal of wildlife photography is accentuated by the limitations of the photographer. There is, indeed, more to life on this planet than its colonisation by humans. Extensive documentation of flora and fauna instills a sense of posterity towards nature. It can also be used as a potent instrument to remind mankind of the pitfalls of greed and apathy. Wildlife photography, thus, is a form of crusade against man-made interference and deterioration of the ecosystem.

**Aparajita Sinha, Mumbai, via email**

🔴 The story '18 Photographers Share Their Incredible Stories on Nature and Wildlife Photography', appeared in the October 2015 issue. It featured the photographers' valuable insights on shooting nature and wildlife.



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# SnapShots

## WHAT'S NEW

### Canon EOS M10

The M10 features an 18MP APS-C CMOS sensor, a 3-inch 1.04M dot tilting touchscreen LCD, built-in WiFi with NFC, 1080/30p video recording and has a built-in flash. However, it does not feature a viewfinder and hot shoe. Additionally, the M10's Hybrid CMOS II AF system has been upgraded to 49 points, and its ISO range has been expanded to 25,600. The camera will also feature a new collapsible 15–45mm f/3.5-6.3 IS kit lens.



### Sigma 20mm f/1.4 DG HSM Art

The Sigma 20mm f/1.4 has been touted as the fastest 20mm lens in the world, and is designed for full frame and APS-C sensors. The lens is available for Canon EF, Nikon F and Sigma models, and is designed in a manner to combat lateral chromatic aberrations. Additionally, the lens' Super Multi-Layer Coating helps to keep flare under control. It is currently priced at USD 899 (approx. Rs. 58,232).



### Rokinon Prime Lenses

The Rokinon 21mm f/1.4 is a wide angle lens, with equivalent focal lengths of 31.5mm and 42mm for APS-C and MFT systems respectively. The 50mm f/1.2 is a prime portrait lens, with equivalent focal lengths of 75mm and 100mm for APS-C and MFT systems respectively. Both the lenses are manual focus only, and are available for Canon EF-M, Fujifilm X, Micro Four Thirds, and Sony E mounts.



### HD PENTAX-D FA 24–70mm f/2.8 ED SDM WR

The lens features a large f/2.8 constant maximum aperture and is compatible with Pentax full frame and 35mm image sensors, thus making it compatible with the current and future camera models from the company. It provides a 37–107mm range with current Pentax K-series APS-C bodies.



## Anti-War Crusader Kikujirō Fukushima Passes Away

Japanese photographer Kikujirō Fukushima, well-known for his coverage of nuclear disasters in post-World War II Japan, succumbed to a stroke on 24 September. He was 94 years old.

Fukushima began his career photographing the survivors of the nuclear bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. His award-winning photo album, *Atomic Bomb: Records of One Atomic Bomb Survivor*, was published in 1961. He went on to become one of the staunchest critics of Japan's decision to take part in the war, creating works that highlighted many contemporary social and political issues. He maintained his distance from the government till his death, as a form of protest.

After a period of reclusion starting in 1982, Fukushima returned to photograph the nuclear disaster of 2011, which affected a town he shared his last name with. He has been commemorated in a 2012 Japanese documentary film, *Japan Lies—The Photojournalism of Kikujirō Fukushima*.



Kikujirō Fukushima

## The RX1R Gets a New Iteration, Now With 42.4MP

Sony recently released the latest full frame compact camera in the CyberShot RX series, with significant upgrades as well as new additions. The RX1R II features a 42.4MP sensor as



compared to the 24MP sensor on the RX1R. The maximum ISO speed has also been increased from 25,600 to 1,02,400.

Like its predecessor, the RX1R II sports a 35mm f/2.0 Zeiss lens. However, while the viewfinder was an optional accessory in the RX1R, the RX1R II has a 2.4 million dot retractable electronic viewfinder that can be tilted over a span of 150°. It is also

equipped with an optical variable low-pass filter, touted to be the first of its kind among digital cameras. While the filter in the RX1R could be operated either in the 'On' or 'Off' modes, this filter has 3 modes—'On', 'High', and 'Standard', aimed at striking a balance between better image resolution and reduced colour artifacts.

The camera also features a continuous autofocus mode to track moving objects, even the eye of a moving subject. It also supports the 14-bit uncompressed RAW format, in addition to video recording in Full HD. It is currently priced at USD 3299 (approx. Rs. 2,13,460).

“ Making a photograph is as difficult as finding a particularly frisky cat in a dark room. Making a great photograph is as chancy as trying to catch a frisky cat in a black room in which there is no cat. ”

**BILL JAY (1940–2009)**

Bill Jay was born in Midsenhead, England. Early in his career, Jay worked for several photographic periodicals and was the first Editor/Director of *Creative Camera* magazine and was the founder of *Album* magazine. He also founded the program of Photographic Studies at Arizona State University, USA, where he taught History and Criticism classes for 25 years. His career includes being the first Director of Photography at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Jay has published over 400 articles and is the author of more than 20 books on the history and criticism of photography.

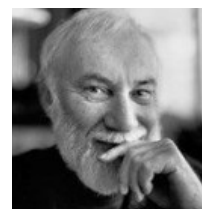


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[www.billjayonphotography.com](http://www.billjayonphotography.com)



## WHAT'S NEW

### Voigtlander Lenses

The three new lenses—10mm f/5.6, 12mm f/5.6 and the 15mm f/4.5 can be used on the Sony E-Mount without an adapter. The lenses feature the selective aperture control system in the full frame format for the first time.

### Nikkor AF-S 200–500mm f/5.6E ED VR

The lens makes use of vibration reduction to reduce the extent of image blur. This, combined with the fast f/5.6 aperture, is aimed at wildlife, motorsport and landscape photography. The zoom power of the lens can also be enhanced with the aid of a teleconverter, in FX-format DSLRs.

### Honor 7

Huawaei's flagship smartphone, which was initially released in July 2015, is now available in India. The Honor 7 features a 20MP rear camera and an 8MP front camera, powered by a dual LED flash. It is priced at Rs. 22,999.



### Konica Minolta bizhub C221

The colour printer eliminates the need of a PC for scanning and printing operations. USB connectivity enables the device to access files from mobile devices as well as cloud services. Additionally, the printer features several built-in functions to aggregate and save paper, watermark documents, as well as printing in the two-colour mode.



## Photojournalist Brings Oppressive Cop to Justice

Ashutosh Tripathi, a photojournalist from Uttar Pradesh, struck a chord with social media, after photographs he had shot of a police officer abusing an elderly typist went viral.

Tripathi had been a reporter with *Dainik Bhaskar* for two years, and had recently started shooting for the newspaper. On the day that the event took place, he was out for a cup of tea when he noticed a police officer tearing down makeshift shops in the vicinity of the Lucknow GPO. He immediately sprung into action by the time police officer Pradeep Kumar, confronted the 65-year-old typist Krishna Kumar, who made his living by typing out documents.

According to Tripathi, the officer started abusing Kumar despite his compliance and destroyed his typewriter. He also claims that the police officer threatened him with dire consequences if he did not delete the photographs he had shot of the event. But when Tripathi refused to stop, the officer defiantly asked him to continue shooting, and seemed confident about his actions. Tripathi immediately took to Facebook and

published a collage of the images. The post quickly went viral in a span of a few hours, and was shared over 35,000 times, as of now. This eventually prompted the authorities to suspend the officer. The police department also replaced Kumar's typewriter, upon the behest of the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav.

Tripathi has mentioned that while the incident was happenstance, he did not expect it to turn into an internet phenomenon. He considers it an opportunity to stand up for the victims of the brazen abuse of power. *Turn to page 106 for a look into the entire chain of events.*



Ashutosh Tripathi/Dainik Bhaskar

## Manfrotto Device to Assist Remote Photography

The Digital Director by Manfrotto is aimed at assisting photographers and videographers with managing their workflow. The device works with Canon and Nikon DSLRs and the iPad Air and Air 2.

With the help of a USB cable, it can be connected to the camera or the iPad. This allows a wide range of functions such as remote shooting, file management, image adjustment, and content sharing. Remote control of the aperture, exposure, image quality, ISO, manual focus and shutter speed, facilitates managing an entire shoot in the Focus, Camera and Drive modes. The MVDDA13 and the MVDDA14, designed for the iPad Air and Air 2 respectively, are both priced at Rs. 37,109.



## The Natural History Museum Unveils its Winner

The Natural History Museum contest, the world's biggest and most prestigious wildlife photography award, announced the winner of its prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year title. It was bagged by Don Gutoski, who won for his incredible photograph titled *A Tale of Two Foxes*. It featured a red fox hauling the carcass of his Arctic cousin, at the Wapusk National Park in Canada.

In an interview with BBC News, Gutoski mentioned that the image was the best photograph that he has shot in his life. "It's the symmetry of the heads, the bodies and the tails—even the expression on the faces," he says. Gutoski's image was chosen from

42,000 entries. Although park guides have witnessed the conflict between the two species, this is the first time that an image has been made highlighting this aspect.

The photograph is also a strong reflection on the current state of the climate, and how it's leading such species to go on a war path for survival.



Don Gutoski

## EVENTS

### 26 September–10 November Imaging the Isle Across—Vintage Photography from Ceylon

National Museum—New Delhi



Alkazi Foundation for the Arts

The exhibition features photographs which promises to 'take viewers through a mapping of sites as well as visual tropes and themes emerging from photography in the region via diverse mediums of production such as single prints, albums, illustrated books and postcards.'

### 30 September–7 November When Dead Ships Travel

Project 88, Mumbai

Photographer Shumon Ahmed has debuted his solo exhibition *When Dead Ships Travel*, along with his earlier acclaimed series titled *Metal Graves*. The exhibit throws light on the appalling side effects of industrialisation.

### 9 October–3 November Nemai Ghosh— Satyajit Ray and Beyond

Kamalnayan Bajaj Hall & Art Gallery, Mumbai



Nemai Ghosh

The exhibition features several iconic and never-before-seen images shot by Nemai Ghosh, over a period of 25 years, on the sets of the legendary director Satyajit Ray.

### 14 October–9 November Tales and Fables from India & Japan: Animation, Film and Photography

The Japan Foundation Gallery, New Delhi

The works of 19 emerging and mid-career Indian and Japanese artists and collectives, working in media arts, are displayed at the exhibit. The showcase is 'intended to function as an anthology of tales and contemporary approaches in storytelling from the two countries.'

## PRO TALK

**Butterfly Lighting** is a form of lighting in which the main source of light is placed high and directly in front of the subject.

## World Press Photo Publishes Study on Photojournalism

World Press Photo recently published the results of its study, *The State of News Photography: The Lives and Livelihoods of Photojournalists in the Digital Age*, conducted in collaboration with the University of Stirling and the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. It had 1556 participants from over 100 countries, and covered a multitude of topics such as employment trends, work environments, and editorial ethics.

The study reports that photojournalism as a profession is riskier than ever, with 92%

of the respondents reporting that they have encountered physical risk at some point or the other.

It also raises concerns over the state of professional ethics in photojournalism. Less than 50% of the news photographers stated that they never stage photographs. Incidentally, the jury for the World Press Photo 2014 contest had disqualified not only 20% of the finalists, but also the initial winner of the first prize, on grounds of misrepresentation of images.

## Voigtlander's Rangefinder Cameras are Now History

Japanese manufacturer Cosina has decided to discontinue the Voigtlander Bessa 35mm Rangefinder camera. Owing to a decline in the number of sales, the production of the Bessa R2A, R3A and the R4A cameras had already been stopped a year ago.

The Voigtlander brand has had an illustrious history, dating all the way back to 1756. It was licensed to Cosina in 1999. The decision of the company, once it comes to effect, will stop the manufacture of the entire lineup of the Bessa Rangefinder cameras and all its associated accessories.

## CALL FOR ENTRIES



**Participate to win the latest camera from the Olympus PEN series, along with prize money of over 5 lakhs.**

### Olympus Global Open Photo Contest 2015

**The Competition:** A platform to connect photographers from all over the world.

**Categories:** Life—Birth, Future—Places to Preserve and People—Smiles and Laughter.

**Prizes:** The grand prize winner will receive the latest Olympus PEN camera, along with a lens kit and 1 million Japanese Yen (approx. Rs. 5,40,060).

**Website:** [www.gopc.olympus-imaging.com](http://www.gopc.olympus-imaging.com)

**Deadline:** 20 November

### Smithsonian Annual Photo Contest 2015

**The Competition:** The contest is looking for captivating photographs from across the globe.

**Categories:** Natural World, Travel, People, The American Experience, Altered Images, Mobile and Sustainable Travel.

**Prizes:** The grand prize winner will receive USD 2500 (approx. Rs. 1,61,975), and the category winners will each receive USD 500 (approx. Rs. 32,395).

**Website:** [www.smithsonianmag.com/photocontest/submission/Pno-ist](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/photocontest/submission/Pno-ist)

**Deadline:** 25 November

### National Geographic Traveller 2016

**The Competition:** This year, the contest is inviting entries based on the theme of travel.

**Categories:** Action, Mobile, Urban, Portfolio, People, Nature and Video.

**Prizes:** The grand prize winner will win an exclusive five-night stay in Tanzania at the heart of the Serengeti, the Portfolio winner will get to travel to Vietnam and the Mobile winner will win a trip to Abu Dhabi.

**Website:** [www.natgeotraveller.co.uk/competition/photography-competition-2016](http://www.natgeotraveller.co.uk/competition/photography-competition-2016)

**Deadline:** 13 December

### The Other Hundred

**The Competition:** The aim of the contest is 'to challenge conventional thinking by showcasing those whose lives deserve to be celebrated, yet are overlooked by the mainstream media.'

**Theme:** The Other Hundred Educators.

**Prizes:** The winner will receive USD 5000 (approx. Rs. 3,23,860). The second and third prize winner will receive USD 2000 (approx. Rs. 1,29,545) and USD 1000 (approx. Rs. 64,770), respectively.

**Website:** [www.theotherhundred.com](http://www.theotherhundred.com)

**Deadline:** 15 February 2016



## EVENTS

28 October–15 November

### The Tasveer Journal

Exhibit 320, New Delhi



As part of its 10th anniversary celebrations, Tasveer is putting together a special print version of a selection of photo essays previously featured in *The Tasveer Journal*. It will be showcased at various festivals, exhibits and public spaces, and will feature the works of 21 artists.

13–15 November

### The Leopard's Lair

Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, Kabini

The photo tour, organised by Toehold, will be conducted by wildlife photography experts Philip Ross and Giri Cavale. The cost of the tour ranges from Rs. 21,950 to Rs. 42,900. To register, visit [www.toehold.in/phototours/2015/kabini-wildlife-photography-tour.php](http://www.toehold.in/phototours/2015/kabini-wildlife-photography-tour.php)

15 December

### Adobe Camera RAW Corrections Workshop

Ambitions 4 Photography Academy, Chennai

The one-day workshop will focus on postprocessing techniques using the Adobe Camera RAW module, lens profile corrections and effects techniques, amongst other things. For more information and to register visit [www.ambitions4.com](http://www.ambitions4.com) or contact +91-9444441190.

17–20 December

### Kaziranga Wildlife Photography Tour

Kaziranga National Park, Nagaon



Be a part of the picturesque flora and fauna of the Kaziranga National Park. The cost of the tour is Rs. 24,490 per person. For more information visit [www.goingwild.in/upcoming-trip/74/Kaziranga-Wildlife-Photography-Tour](http://www.goingwild.in/upcoming-trip/74/Kaziranga-Wildlife-Photography-Tour)

## PRO TALK

**Surrealism** was originally an early 1920's artistic movement. The word is often used to indicate images that take reality to a new level.

## Photographer Christophe Agou Passes Away

French documentary and street photographer Christophe Agou, passed away on 16 September at the age of 46. For more than two decades, subtlety was the ace up Agou's sleeve. His tryst with documentary style and street photography began in France. It was here that he taught himself the art of expressing the human condition in allusive photographs, shot in black and white and colour.

Agou moved to New York in 1992, where the city's subways provided him fodder for his first major publication, *Life Below*. After Bruce Davidson's iconic documentation of the city's subways,



Christophe Agou

Agou's series on the same subject has been considered to be a strong contender. His images of people invoked a sense of isolation amid the bustling lifestyle of the city.

Later, he returned to his hometown, travelling extensively to document the lesser-known side of the lives of farmers in rural France. This culminated in his second work, *In the Face of Silence*, released as a documentary. It has been released in six different languages ever since, winning him the European Publishers Award for Photography in 2010.

## THE MONTH THAT WAS

### Derry Moore: Evening Ragas

Derry Moore, the 12th Earl of Drogheda, had his work *Derry Moore: Evening Ragas*, displayed at the Kitaki—The Window art gallery in Bengaluru. It was an exhibition organised by Tasveer Art Gallery and Ranga Shankara theatre, from 15 September–20 October. The work has been described as 'a study in colonialism, nostalgia and cultural osmosis' in the aftermath of the British empire.

### Maharanis: Women of Royal India

Tasveer Art Gallery organised an exhibition titled *Maharanis: Women of Royal India* at The Harrington

⬇ The photographs below were part of the *Maharanis: Women of Royal India* exhibition organised by Tasveer Art Gallery.



Street Arts Centre in Kolkata. The exhibition which was held from 1–14 October, included images from the archives of the Museum of Art and Photography, royal collections from across the subcontinent and other institutional and private collections both in India and abroad, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum and National Portrait Gallery in London, and the Amar Mahal Museum and Library in Jammu.

### My Take Photography Exhibit

Mumbai-based photographer Sanjay Marathe exhibited his photographs of Delhi's monuments, landscapes and its people. The event took place at the International Habitat Centre in New Delhi from 1–31 October.

### Retrospective on J P Singhal

On 15 October, a retrospective on the renowned photographer and painter J P Singhal, was held at the Sir J J School of Art in Mumbai. The event was inaugurated by Bollywood actress Juhi Chawla, and featured more than 100 original paintings and images from the photographer. The event was open to the public from 16–20 October.

### Looking Askance Photo Exhibition

Held at Gallerysyke in New Delhi, from 17–29 October, *Looking Askance* featured the contemporary photographic works from artists like Matthew Connors, Valerie Snobeck and Daniel Traub, amongst many others. Their work 'examined the shifting understanding of documentary photography across the globe.'

Tasveer Art Gallery

## PETA Files Copyright Suit on Behalf of Monkey!

The feud between Wikipedia and wildlife photographer, David Slater, over selfies taken by a monkey, is now in court and no longer bilateral.



The dispute originated in August 2014, when Wikimedia Commons posted the images to its online library. Naruto, an endangered monkey residing in the Indonesian National Park, had playfully shot the self-portraits using the photographer's equipment, during his visit to the park.

Wikipedia has argued that since it wasn't Slater who had shot the photographs, and since there is no provision in the law to provide copyrights to an animal, the image is in the public domain.

PETA, an organisation campaigning for equitable rights to animals, has now filed a federal lawsuit against Slater in San Francisco, claiming copyright privileges for Naruto. While legal counsels on both sides have cited contrasting interpretations of the copyright law, the battle among Wikipedia, PETA and Slater is now touted to be a landmark case.

## Canon Announces 1-inch Sensor Compact with EVF

Canon has released two new compact cameras with the largest sensor size in the PowerShot series—the G5 X and the G9 X. The G5 X is equipped with a 1-inch, 20.2MP high-sensitivity CMOS sensor, and a maximum ISO speed of 12,800. It is also the first PowerShot G-series camera to feature a 2.36 million dot electronic viewfinder, designed to provide high resolution images, even in low light conditions. The lens has a 35mm equivalent focal length range of 24–100mm, with an f/1.8 maximum aperture.

The G9 X has a similar sensor configuration, with an optical zoom lens and a 35mm equivalent focal length range of

28–84mm. The fast f/2 aperture also makes it suitable for low light shooting. Both the cameras can record Full HD video, possess a DIGIC 6 processor, offers RAW shooting, and features a built-in ND filter and pop-up flash. The G5 X and the G9 X retail for USD 799 (approx. Rs. 51,698) and USD 529 (approx. Rs. 34,228), respectively.



## Zeiss Diversifies its Wide Angle Lineup

Carl Zeiss released two new wide-angle lenses aimed at both bright and low light shooting conditions. The Otus 28mm f/1.4 is a wide-angle lens, which combines



the quality of the medium format with the high resolution of the Distagon design. It has been designed to minimise the effects of lateral, axial and spherical chromatic aberrations while shooting high-contrast images. It can be used with both the F (ZF.2) as well as the EF (ZE) mounts.

On the other hand, the Zeiss Loxia 21mm f/2.8 is designed specifically for Sony Alpha 7 cameras and full-frame format sensors. The DeClick feature allows the aperture ring to turn smoothly instead of clicking into f-stops, to avoid abrupt changes in brightness while changing the aperture.

### BOOK REVIEW

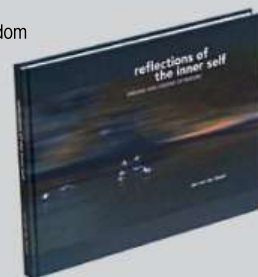
**Title:** Reflections of the Inner Self: Dreams and Visions of Nature  
**Authors:** Jan Van der Greef  
**ISBN:** 978-9082232608  
**Publisher:** Molenberg B.V.  
h.o.d.n. Epos Press  
**Price:** 37 Pounds (approx. Rs. 3747)

## Fleeting Visions In The Heart of Wilderness

Jan Van der Greef writes that his childhood experience with disability invoked in him a strong desire to seek freedom while being constrained. *Reflections of the Inner Self: Dreams and Visions of Nature* provides a consolidated journal of this quest, interspersed with his own vivid accounts, as well as a selection of his choicest quotes.

It comes as little of a surprise that birds fascinate him the most. Breathtaking images of birds captured in solitude, as well as those flying en masse, take the reader through a photographic journey full of visions of ambition, freedom, connectivity, stillness, fluidity, innocence, and encompassing all of these, the search for meaning within one's own self in a dalliance with nature. The images have been aptly captioned thereof, and reading between them presents the occurrence of a singular phenomenon. Van der Greef's impressions of his childhood sent him on his search of his dreams and visions, rendered one at a time within a snapshot of a fleeting moment. To the reader, the process is the other way round.

Van der Greef's use of blurring and silhouettes is striking across all the themes portrayed. He employs the use of the most potent devices known to photographers to recreate the surreal nature of some of his experiences. For this reason, the artistic boundaries—between the use of text to interpret a photography album, and the use of images to accompany one's introspection of a lifetime—blurs, very aptly. It is probably for this reason that some of his seemingly ordinary portraits blend seamlessly into the surreal narrative. Van der Greef has termed this process ever evolving, but this record of the same has captured that spirit, making it more than a wildlife photography album.



— Written by Sachin Sai



## High-res Photos of the Apollo Missions Now Available

Over 8400 photographs of NASA's moon missions are available to the public, thanks to the Project Apollo Archive. The massive image library was created by Kipp Teague in February 1999.

Teague mentions, "Contrary to some recent media reports, this new Flickr gallery is not a NASA undertaking, but an independent one, involving the re-presentation of the public domain NASA-provided Apollo mission imagery as it was originally provided in its raw, high-resolution and unprocessed form

by the Johnson Space Center..." You can find the archive at [www.flickr.com/photos/projectpolloarchive](http://www.flickr.com/photos/projectpolloarchive)



Project Photo Archive

## Kate Winslet to Play Lee Miller in Upcoming Biopic

English actress Kate Winslet is all set to portray the role of the iconic photographer Lee Miller, in a forthcoming movie, based on the biography *The Lives of Lee Miller*, written by her son Antony Penrose.

In a recent interview with *The Telegraph*, Penrose expressed his excitement at the news that Winslet will be portraying his mother. To this he added, "I cannot think of anyone better."

## Sixteen Cameras in One!

The Light L16 consists of 16 cameras of multiple fixed focal lengths, 10 of which can be used to shoot simultaneously. The individual images shot can then be fused together to create a high-quality 52MP photograph.

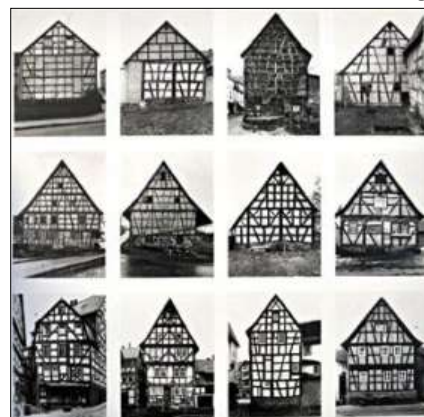
The ambitious venture by a team of technologists and investors, aims at offering photographers an enhanced depth of field and true optical zoom, for shooting images even in low light conditions.

In addition to five 35mm, five 70mm and six 150mm lens/sensor modules, it also features an on-board editing interface and WiFi connectivity. It is currently available for pre-order at USD 1699 (approx. Rs. 1,09,930), with a launch month discount of USD 400 (approx. Rs. 25,880).



## Industrial Photographer Hilla Becher Passes Away

Renowned German photographer Hilla Becher, passed away on 10 October. She, along with her husband Bernd Becher, had a great influence on architectural photography during the 1960s and 70s. The duo were known for their typologic images of water towers, winding towers and cooling towers, which they photographed in a straightforward and detached fashion. They did so in order to document the vanishing industrial structures in Germany during the 1960s. Their work has influenced a series of photographers like Thomas Ruff, Thomas Struth and Andreas Gursky.



Hilla Becher

## Playboy to Stop Publishing Nude Photographs

The March 2016 issue of *Playboy* will be the last to feature nude photographs of women. The move was suggested by Senior Editor Cory Jones, to the magazine's Editor-in-Chief, Hugh Hefner. *Playboy* had already stopped posting nudity on its website since August 2014, a move that has quadrupled its online readership to 16 million.

The content of the magazine has had an illustrious relationship with attitudes towards sex and sexuality not only in the US, but also all over the world. While it covered a broad range of subjects including literature, news and investigative features, it has also attracted criticism for the objectification of women.

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**Amritsar:** Nagina Singh, Head of the Amritsar Photographic Welfare Association, addresses the audience



**Jabalpur:** Wedding photographer William Chang, demonstrates the use of Manfrotto tripods during weddings



**Jaipur:** Professional photographer Amarjeet Singh, explains the importance of light in wedding portraiture



**Jodhpur:** Sana Ur Rahman from Canon Pro DV Division is seen conducting a live demo of the company's video cameras



**Jodhpur:** Amarjeet Singh Maggu addressing the attendees of the workshop at Jodhpur



**Ludhiana:** William Chang discusses his career and the ups and downs of being a wedding photographer



**New Delhi:** Gaurav Makan from Canon Pro DV Division, conducts a live videography demo, where participants were given insightful ideas on making pictures



**New Delhi:** Gaurav Markan from Cinema EOS and PRO DV Division, Canon India conducting workshop on cinematography and product line.



# GearGuide

## HOW WE TEST

### Product Categorisation

We first segregate products into categories for the purpose of equitability in testing. The DSLR is divided into entry-level, semi-professional and professional categories. For compacts, we distinguish between advanced and basic compact cameras. Similarly, we also test consumer and pro lenses, flashguns, printers, and other photographic accessories and gear.

### The Process

We primarily test for features, performance, build, ergonomics, warranty and support. While this remains constant, the weightage we give to these parameter differs from category to category, because different types of consumers have diverse expectations from products.

### Final Ratings

Under each main parameter, we list out hundreds of individual variables (for eg. colour accuracy for individual colours in different lighting, individual features, dynamic range, center-to-edge definition, light falloff, etc) against which we either give points or simply mark 'yes' or 'no'. Thus, we arrive at a score for that parameter, and then, the final score, denoted as a percentage. Additionally, based on the current pricing of a product, a star rating for 'Value for Money' is considered. Value for Money does not affect the final percentage, because prices for products change constantly.

### Our Seals of Approval

Any product that scores 80% or higher in individual tests gets 'BP Recommended'—a seal of approval from our team. In comparison tests, we also tag products as 'BP Best Performer' and 'BP Best Value for Money'.

### BP Excellence Awards

At the end of the calendar year, the highest rated products in each category automatically win the Better Photography Excellence Award. This is Better Photography's recognition of the very best products launched in the course of the year, and the companies that made them.



Sigma dp0 Quattro 14mm f/4

# Of Odds & Ends

With every other feature (including the underlying philosophy) remaining exactly the same as its siblings, the dp1, dp2 and dp3, the ultrawide angle lens of the Sigma dp0 Quattro makes it quite unique. K Madhavan Pillai reports.

Sigma's Quattro series has come a long way in building a cult following for itself by following a simple principle—it is better to do an excellent job with a few things rather than an average job with a lot of things. Going by my experience of the superb optics of the previous dp cameras, I personally looked forward to the dp0 with its 14mm fixed lens (21mm on full frame).

In all but the lens, the four cameras (dp3, 2, 1 and 0) are the same. They all have identical 29.4MP Foveon sensors capable of producing a slightly interpolated output of 39MP. As we have experienced in our previous reviews, the stacked sensor easily surpasses the image quality produced by any other APS-C sensor so far, at settings of ISO 100 to 800. In fact, at ISO 100 and 200, it challenges all but the very latest full frame high resolution sensors as well. The controls layout, handling and build are also exactly the same across the series. Thus, this review is more a test of the lens, while looking at how it affects the camera.

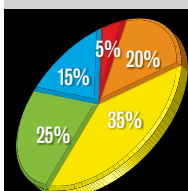
### Features

Sigma designed the rectilinear 14mm lens of the dp0 to provide a path for the light to reach the sensor in as straight a manner as possible, resulting in a lens that is the largest amongst the dp Quattro series of cameras despite having the smallest focal length.

The lens is made up of four FLD ('F' Low Dispersion) glass lens elements with performance similar to that of fluorite lenses, two SLD (Special Low Dispersion) elements, and two aspherical elements, one of which is a wide double-sided aspheric. Together, these allow a 91-degree field of view while keeping distortion to less than 1% (astounding for an ultrawide) and maintaining sharpness across the frame at different apertures. This could be the reason for the lens to have a maximum aperture of just f/4, unlike f/2.8 in the other dp Quattro cameras.

The dp0 has the shortest minimum focusing distance of 7 inches, a 7 blade aperture that also doubles as the shutter, and a filter size of 58mm.

### WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



■ Features  
■ Performance  
■ Build Quality  
■ Ergonomics  
■ Warranty & Support



TEST

## Sigma 24–35mm f/2 DG HSM Art

The world's fastest zoom lens, is there even any competition?

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TEST

## Tamron SP 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD

Could this be the 35mm segment killer?

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All photographs by K. Madhavan Pillai



### ALSO LOOK FOR

- Sigma dp1 Merrill
- Sigma dp1 Quattro
- Fujifilm X100T
- Ricoh GR II

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🔴 I misplaced the lens cap of the dp0 for a couple of days, and discovered that it had become one of Sihaya's prized possessions. I had to steal it back from her. Apart from the expected perspective distortion, notice how the lines are perfectly straight. The extremely high level of contrast had completely blown out the highlights in the JPEG (despite setting the contrast at -0.2 in the camera). On processing the RAW, plenty of subtle details could be recovered.

Exposure: 1/60sec at f/5.6 (ISO 200)



## PLUS

- Foveon sensor
- Optical quality

## MINUS

- High ISO noise

## Handling

Here's where the odds kick in. While the loss of a stop may not seem like much, it restricts handheld use in low light situations, especially with street photography, which would otherwise have been ideal for this focal length. On the other hand, the minimal number of moving elements during AF

speeds up AF performance over the other dp Quattro cameras and the focus limit modes works well. The AF gets sluggish in low light. The MF ring conveniently extends all the way to the front. In the magnified view, one is able to determine focus quite accurately. The lack of any other MF assist features make it a slower process.

➔ With the dp0, it is not just about being close to the action, but right in the middle of it. That said, the dp0 is not meant for low light handheld street photography. Exposure: 1/500sec at f/4 (ISO 1600)

## ERGONOMICS

### Front



The dp0 Quattro is almost panoramic in structure, with no controls accessed from the front. The AF assist lamp is built into the edge of the lens, which sports a filter diameter of 58mm thread. Unlike the previous dp cameras, the lenshood comes supplied.

### Top



As compared to the other dp Quattro cameras, this lens provides a much better handheld shooting experience. The grip extends more from the back rather than the front, but affords a good grip and access to buttons. The two input dials on top are well designed.

### Rear



The buttons are large and convenient. The four-way controller with the focus mode and point selection sits on the handgrip and a new user might find it somewhat difficult to use. The hotshoe is in the same line of vision as the lens, in case an optical viewfinder is used.



## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Sigma dp0 Quattro
MRP	Rs 79,900
Effective pixels	29 megapixels
Max. resolution	7,680 x 5,120 pixels
Sensor size, type	23.5 x 15.7mm, Foveon X3 Direct Image CMOS sensor, vertical colour separation, no low pass, no stabilisation
Lens type	Ultrawide prime, 14mm (equiv. to 21mm on full frame), non-interchangeable
Recording formats	Stills: 14bit RAW, JPEG
Focusing system and modes	Contrast detect, min. focus distance of 7 inches (max. magnification of 1:7.8), 9 points AF, select mode, size of individual focus point can be shifted to Spot, Regular and Large, face detection, manual focus, focus lock, focus limit function for macro, portrait, and scenery
Metering	Evaluative, center-weighted average, spot
Shutter type and Shutter speed range	Electronically-controlled, aperture based lens shutter, 1/2000 to 30sec, (depending on the aperture value, highest shutter speed changes)
Colour space	sRGB, Adobe RGB
ISO	Auto, 100–6400
Viewfinder	none in-built or supplied, optional hotshoe mounted optical viewfinder VF-51
LCD	TFT, 3in, 920k dots, non-tilting
Other Settings	Basic exposure modes (PASM), 10 white balance types including custom, 11 colour modes (including FOV Classic Blue and Classic Yellow, and monochrome), in-built filters
Battery	Lithium-ion, 2 units with camera
Dimensions, Weight	161(W) x 67mm(H) x 126mm(D), 500g without battery

## Performance

Few wide angle lenses perform as well as this 14mm. Apart from superb edge-to-edge sharpness even wide open, the lens has a high level of microcontrast and resistance to flare. From f/4 to f/11, the sharpness is exemplary. Critical sharpness drops progressively beyond f/11, and the lens goes noticeably soft at f/22. But despite this, it is a lot better than other similar lenses. The various quirks of the both the sensor and the unconventional camera design of the body remain.

## Conclusion

When the ends dictate the means, there is always a way out. Despite all the limitations of the dp0, the quality of image at ISO 100 and the fantastic lens is worth the additional effort it takes. Low light street photography? Use a flashgun with hyperfocal distances set so that you do not need to focus. Or begin using a tripod. In that sense, the Quattro series provides as close an experience of using film as it gets in digital photography.

The camera is priced at Rs. 79,900. While it may seem like an expensive buy, it allows the users a choice. For instance, DSLRs with the same quality of image and optics will cost four times as much, but will offer far greater flexibility. The question, of course, is if you are the kind of photographer for whom all that additional effort to make a single picture makes sense. If it does, the Sigma dp0 is quite fantastic indeed. **BP**

## Noise Test



The dynamic range, details and sharpness are at their superlative best at ISO 100, even surpassing all but the most recent full-frame high resolution cameras. ISO 200 and 400 are also quite good, with increasing luminance noise, but with pleasing grain structure. From here on, deterioration is rapid. ISO 800 starts showing prominent chrominance noise. ISO 3200 or 6400 are best avoided.

## FINAL RATINGS

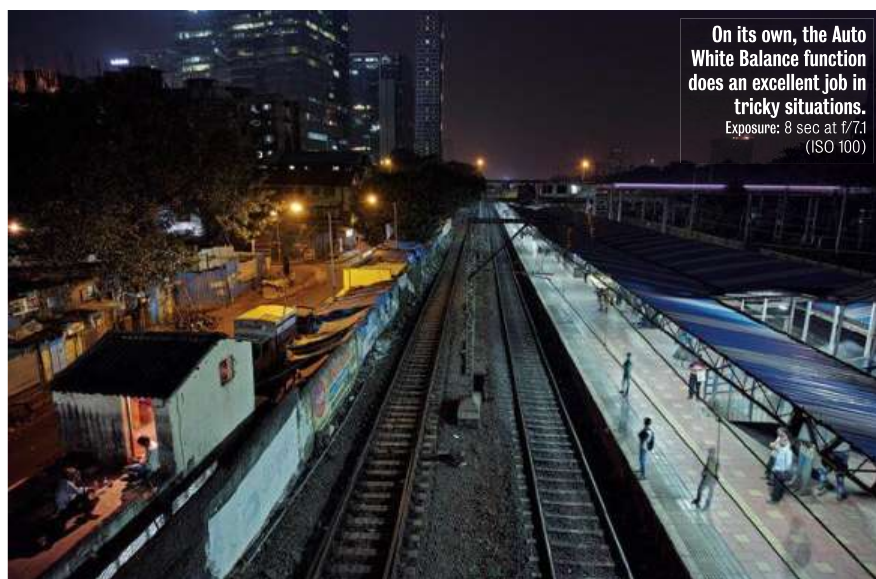
<b>Features</b>	15/20
14mm lens with just distortion levels of less than 1%, APS-C Foveon sensor, 29MP	
<b>Performance</b>	30/35
Superb low ISO detail, quiet, high ISO noise	
<b>Build Quality</b>	21/25
robust magnesium alloy construction	
<b>Ergonomics</b>	11/15
Very unconventional design, simple operation	
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b>	3/5
One-year warranty, limited service centers	

## OVERALL 80%

**Who should buy it?** Serious enthusiasts specialising in landscape, street, environmental portraits, interiors, and architecture, who can make do with low ISO settings.

**Why?** The magic of the dp0 is in its exceptional lens and low ISO performance. In the hands of someone with technical knowhow and patience, it can produce truly stunning results.

**Value for Money** ★★★★★☆





Sigma 24–35mm f/2 DG HSM Art

# Sigma, Sigma, Burning Bright

Much like William Blake's legendary poem, the Sigma 24–35mm f/2 DG HSM Art, the brightest ever full frame zoom lens may well be used to photograph the forests of the night. Raj Lalwani takes the lens through a series of photographic challenges.

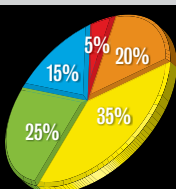
34

Personally, I am going through a phase where I am steering away from zoom lenses. Sure, modern-day zooms often give prime lenses a run for their money in terms of optics, but there are users, like me, who want a prime lens not for any assumed advantage of quality, but to allow the camera to become a part of one's presence, a part of the scene. Fast zoom lenses, being much bulkier, do not allow the same, a drawback that I kept reminding myself when I expressed an interest to test the Sigma 24–35mm f/2.

## Features

But the 24–35mm has already written its way into the imaging history books; it is the first ever full frame zoom to have a fixed f/2 aperture. Neither a 24–70mm, nor a 16–35mm, the focal length range is, what I would jokingly refer to, as the 'sane' wide-angle range—focal lengths that allow you to get into the heart of the action and make intimate shots, but not so wide that things start getting distorted. For the patient, sensitive photographer, it is the perfect field of view to be in somebody else's personal space, but not trespass it outrightly.

### WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



- Features
- Performance
- Build Quality
- Ergonomics
- Warranty & Support

The choice of f/2 as opposed to f/2.8 is great for low light, but considering how good modern cameras are at high ISOs, the real reason why the specification is special is depth control. It gets more interesting. When you approach your subject, you realise how close this lens actually allows you to go! The minimum focusing distance of 0.28m is outstanding for a fast-aperture zoom lens. The soft, inobtrusive bokeh allowed me to experiment with some dynamic compositions that included the subject at mid distance and other passersby, blurred in the foreground, much like a frame to the overall frame. Landscape shooters may want to keep in mind that the lens does not stop down beyond f/16.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Sigma 24–35mm f/2 DG HSM Art
MRP	Rs. 78,900
Lens construction	18 elements in 13 groups
Closest focusing distance	0.28 m
Max. Magnification	1:4.4
Diaphragm blades	9
Max. Aperture	2
Dimensions, Weight	121.9 x 86.4mm, 941g

### PLUS

- Price
- Optical speed of f/2
- Sharpness

### MINUS

- Lack of any weather sealing
- Noticeable vignetting





Sigma Art lenses have a slight warm rendition that is very pleasing to the eye. On the other hand, the bite and microcontrast that the optics provide make for great black and whites. Exposure: 1/400sec at f/4.5 (ISO 100)

Raj Lalwani

A silent Hyper Sonic Motor powers the focusing mechanism, which is fast and assured. Even on the Canon 6D, whose AF system lags behind most cameras at its price point, the 24–35mm does a quick job of locking focus, in all but poor light. On faster AF systems like the 5D Mark III, the focusing is as fast as any proprietary f/2.8 zoom lens.

### Handling


Like previous Art lenses, the lens is not weathersealed, but seems to be very well built. ‘Seems to’ being the operative term though. When we test equipment, we gauge its strength and longevity, but as a personal owner of an Art lens (the 35mm f/1.4), I have come to realise that the rubber rings are susceptible to coming off with wear and tear, sooner than one would expect, probably because of the heat, dust and humidity seen on the Indian coastline.

The grip provided by the focusing ring is excellent, as is the travel required to go from one end of the focusing range to the other. MF is a joy to use, and I often found myself resort to zone focusing while shooting on the streets or in light where the 6D struggled to focus as easily.

### Performance

Sharpness is astounding at 24mm and f/2. At 28mm and 35mm, the centre-to-edge sharpness is excellent, as well. The quality at 35mm isn’t as good as Sigma’s 35mm prime, but on the high-resolution 5Ds, we observed that this zoom lens actually beats the much more expensive (and optically slower) 16–35mm f/2.8 II. Fringing and flare are well controlled, as is distortion, which is minimal, uniform and easily correctable. At f/2, there is prominent light falloff, and it goes away only at f/5.6.

### Conclusion

Despite my initial reservations about the size of the 24–35mm f/2 Art, it’s undeniable that this is one of the most significant pieces of optical technology, ever released. It offers something that no other zoom has, and beats its (non) competitors hollow. Nikon users have the option of buying three inexpensive f/1.8 primes in its place, especially if they want to be more discreet, but the Sigma 24–35mm, huge albeit, is not only an all-in-one solution, but also more economical, with almost the same maximum aperture. With a price of only Rs. 79,900 (the street price being a lot lesser in some cities), it’s an absolute no-brainer of a buy. 

## FINAL RATINGS

<b>Features</b>	19/20
Fastest ever full frame zoom lens, excellent minimum focusing distance.	
<b>Performance</b>	33/35
Excellent sharpness and control over flare, some vignetting, quick AF	
<b>Build Quality</b>	22/25
Sturdily built, but no weathersealing	
<b>Ergonomics</b>	13/15
Extremely large lens, but balances well, physical distance scale	
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b>	3/5
Two-year warranty with service centres in major metropolitan cities	

## OVERALL 90%

**Who should buy it?** Photographers and videographers, dealing with documentary, reportage, or any wedding-related work.

**Why?** The 24–35mm f/2 is like three fast primes in one. It’s bulky, but its relatively low price and quality make it a steal!

**Value for Money** ★★★★★☆



Tamron SP 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD

# A Good Fix to Be In!

**36** The Tamron SP 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD is the company's first wide angle prime lens, and anyone who loves fixed lenses will now be spoiled for choice. **Raj Lalwani** investigates.

With the cameraphone becoming such a dominant medium of expression, fixed wide angle focal lengths like 35mm and 28mm have become the way most of us see the world (as opposed to just a while ago, when most amateurs would crave for more zoom). This is reminiscent of history in many ways, when several iconic chronicles were made with a 35mm lens. And that is why, for the serious photographer, Tamron's decision to introduce fresh lens designs seems so timely. The new 35mm f/1.8 and 45mm f/1.8 are the first prime lenses from the company, aside from the popular 90mm Macro.

## Features

The 35mm, which is on our test bench this month, has some stiff competition. While the Tamron lens costs Rs. 47,500, Nikon has a proprietary lens for around the same cost. A little more money can get you the much acclaimed Sigma 35mm f/1.4 Art lens—which not only has a faster aperture—but until recently, was crowned in our tests as the Holy Grail of 35mm optics. But there are some tricks up Tamron's sleeve.

With a claimed stabilisation of four stops, it is supposed to let you shoot sharp photos at a little less than half a second! In practice, we consistently got around three stops with the Nikon D750, but only two with the higher-resolution D810.

Whether image stabilisation is really useful in a focal length this wide is debatable—most subjects you may want to shoot with a 35mm are not going to stay still—but considering that the identically priced Nikkor does not have VR, Tamron takes this round.

Another unique feature about the SP 35mm f/1.8 VC is its close focusing capability. Most 35mm lenses do manage

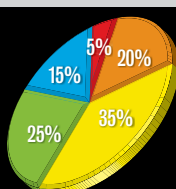
## PLUS

- Weathersealed
- Close focusing
- VC

## MINUS

- Soft corners at widest aperture
- No DOF markings

## WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



- Features
- Performance
- Build Quality
- Ergonomics
- Warranty & Support

## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Tamron SP 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD
MRP	Rs. 47,500
Lens construction	10 elements in 9 groups
Closest focusing distance	0.2m
Max. Magnification	1:2.5
Diaphragm blades	9
Max. Aperture	1.8
Dimensions, Weight	80.4 x 78.3mm, 450g





Diffraction does not set in till very late and the sharpness at f/11 is quite good, both in the centre and towards the edges.  
Exposure: 1/160sec at f/11 (ISO 800)

Raj Lawani

to get reasonably near, but the Tamron gets as close as 20cm. This distance is measured from the lens mount and is thus much closer to the tip of the lens... astonishing!

Is a magnification ratio of 1:2.5 in a lens this wide really practical? As time went by, I realised how I started framing my photos differently because of this, I started getting even closer, physically, to my subjects. The best foreground-background relationships shot with a 35mm lens happen when you are up close, and the Tamron encourages you to loosen up and do this more.

### Handling

In terms of size, the lens falls somewhere between the Nikkor (smaller, as it doesn't have stabilisation) and the Sigma (biggest, with no stabilisation but f/1.4). The Tamron SP 35mm is weathersealed, which is fantastic at this price point, considering that both its competitors do not have this feature.

The Tamron makes one crucial blunder in its design, however. It does not have depth-of-field markings. For a fixed lens of this focal length, you are inclined to just keep the lens to the hyperfocal distance and not bother with focusing, and so, this omission is quite a disappointment.


### Performance

Let's say this from the outset that the Tamron's quality, while very good, does not match the Sigma 35mm. The sharpness of the SP 35mm f/1.8 is excellent in the centre, wide open, but the corners are very soft and the quality does not match the competition. Stop down a bit though, and the story changes. From f/2.8 onwards, the Tamron's corners match the Nikkor head to head, and its centre sharpness is better.

There is some noticeable fringing, more than the competition, but the control over vignetting is excellent... this is one flaw that the other lenses exhibit to a large degree.

AF is fast and all lenses do a reasonably similar job, though the proprietary Nikkor is faster and more assured in its focusing if you are using the corner AF points.

### Conclusion

Clearly, there isn't much to choose between the Tamron and its proprietary counterpart in terms of optics. If you are consistently shooting at f/1.8, you would prefer the Nikkor, but then again, if wide-open shooting is the main application, you should rather invest some more money and get the Sigma. For the others who wish to stay within this budget, the Tamron's close-focusing capabilities make it an astonishing tool, in the right hands. 

## FINAL RATINGS

<b>Features</b>	17/20
Close focusing capability, image stabilisation	
<b>Performance</b>	31/35
Soft corners wide open, great centre sharpness, excellent control over vignetting	
<b>Build Quality</b>	23/25
One of the few in its class to be weathersealed	
<b>Ergonomics</b>	11/15
Balances well, good focusing ring, but no depth-of-field markers	
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b>	3/5
Four-year warranty if bought and registered by end of year, two-year warranty otherwise	

# OVERALL 85%

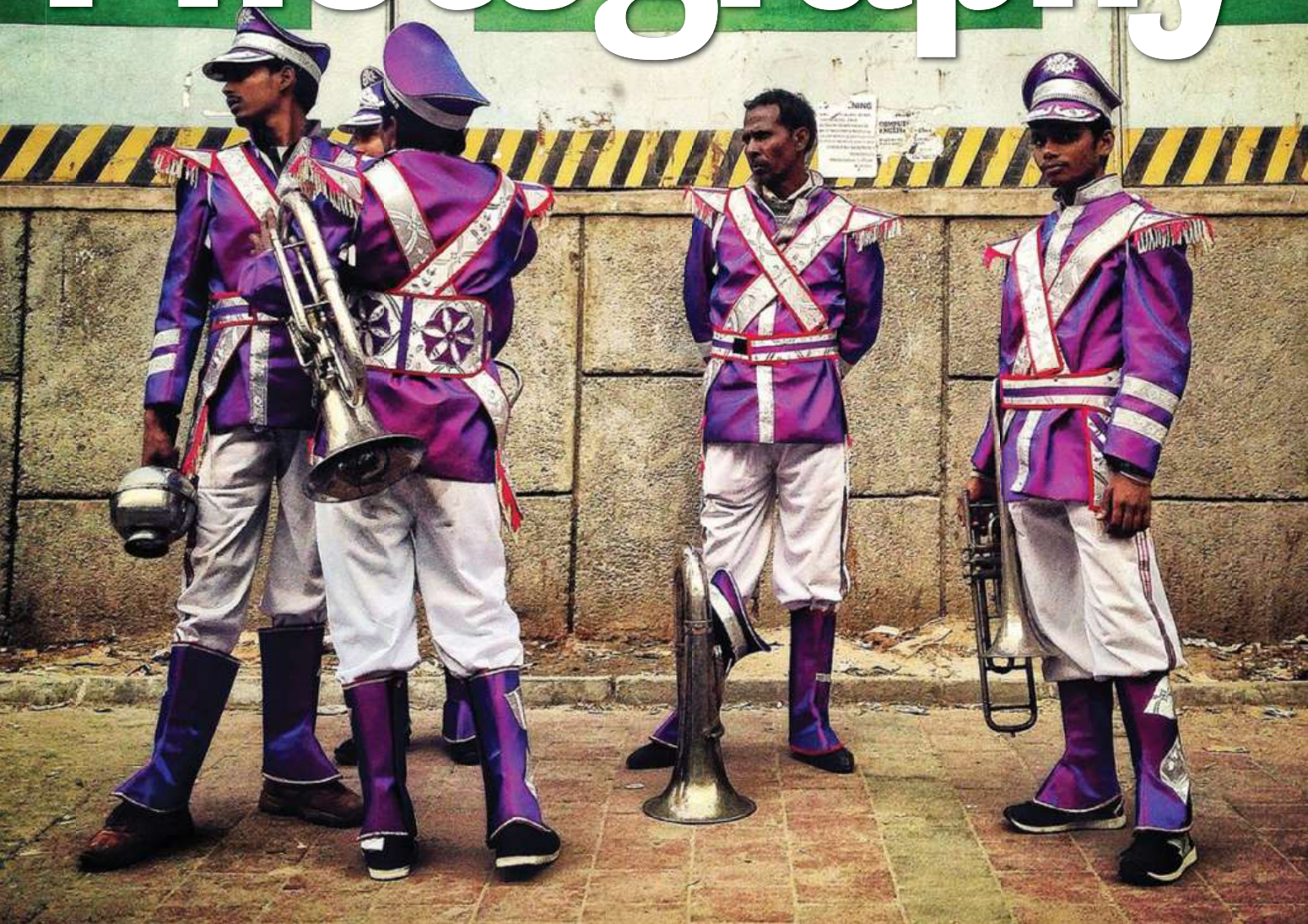
**Who should buy it?** Documentary photographers and portraitists who wish to make use of the unique close focusing capabilities of this lens.

**Why?** This is a feature that no other 35mm lens in the market can match, and it can lead to some interesting photographic possibilities.

**Value for Money** ★★★★★☆



# Better Cellphone Photography



## A LIFE FULL OF STORIES

Follow photojournalist Chandan Khanna and his vignettes of city life

- Exclusive: Asus Zenfone 2 Laser, Lenovo Vibe Shot, Oppo R7 Plus
- The winning images of our contest Colourful Celebrations



**“Have we become such compulsive photographers that we make pictures of whatever we can to achieve the elusive moment?”**



## It Has Become So Easy to Remember... But Do We?

Back in 2002, I was graduating from high school, and I decided to make pictures of the day. There was no such thing as cellphone photography back then, so I resorted to using my trusty Kodak camera and went about the day. I photographed my teachers, my classmates and my friends, with whom I'd make my daily bus journey with.

It's been 13 years since that day, and I have been unable to find those photographs. I wonder if that roll of film was even developed, because I don't remember seeing them.

But the frames I made are vivid in my mind, each shot revealing a memory of simpler times. This is such a stark juxtaposition to the state of my cellphone today, which is filled with photographs that have been shot every single day since I purchased my phone a year back.

And yet, I find that most of the photographs I scrolled through hold little to no memory for me... these photos merely exist on my phone. Is it because it has become so easy to simply press a button and make a photo, that we have lost sight of what is really memorable and what isn't? Have we become such compulsive photographers, in search of the elusive moment, that we shoot whatever we can in order to achieve it?

I simply cannot discount the fact that cellphone photography has made the practice so accessible and made the diaspora a very democratic one. But there's a reason why you still look at your analogue photo albums from the past with fondness. Each of the 36 frames in a roll of film inadvertently captured something special, simply because there was no scope of wasting film. I wonder, should we adopt a similar policy in cellphone photography too? Perhaps restricting ourselves to a certain amount of photos per moment can truly open our eyes to what really matters. I'm starting over, myself. My cellphone gallery is now clean.

**Supriya Joshi**  
supriya.j@network18publishing.com



### Untitled

**by Chandan Khanna**

"I recognise a moment worth capturing when I witness a scene that makes me want to drop everything I'm doing and observe for some time."

To see Chandan Khanna's photojournalistic images of his travels around his city — **'A Life full of Stories'**  
Turn to page 46

To see the winning images from the Readers' Gallery Contest — **'Colourful Celebrations'**  
Turn to page 52

Cover photograph by Chandan Khanna

“

I try to take what voice I have and I give it to those who don't have one at all.

”

**W EUGENE SMITH (1918–1978)**

The iconic American photojournalist is remembered today for mastering the art of photo essays. Some of his most important works include his photos of World War II and how pollution had affected the health of the residents of Minamata in Japan.



Asus Zenfone 2 Laser (ZE550KL)

# A Few Hits, A Few Misses

Conchita Fernandes finds out how the latest iteration from Asus, the Zenfone 2 Laser fares.

**T**wo months ago, Asus had launched the Zenfone 2 Laser which was talked about for its photographic prowess at a budget-friendly price of Rs. 9999. Now the company has come out with a slightly pricier variant, featuring upgrades in RAM, processor and display size. I wanted to see if the camera lives up to the hype that exists around its much-touted features.

## Laser Power Not Quite There

The phone's USP is supposed to be its laser-powered autofocus system, which, when pointed at the subject, fires a laser beam at it, thus allowing the camera to adjust focus accordingly. However, I found that the laser beam technology mostly works well with subjects that are only a few feet away from the camera. The beam isn't strong enough

to focus on objects that are at a distance. Then again, there were instances where the camera refused to focus on my cat even though I was quite close to her.

## Good, But...

The overall shooting experience with the Zenfone was pleasant. However, what I did not like about it were the images that it produced in daylight. Most of the time, the sky was overexposed and the image would have a washed out look. You may need to be careful where you focus as the metering tends to get fooled. Some post work in a software like Snapseed may be required to give images punch.

## Packed with Features

The phone features a 13MP rear camera along with a dual-tone flash, and a 5MP

➔ The Zenfone did a good job at shooting photographs in low light situations. In fact, a lot of the images that I shot were made inside my apartment. Even though the pictures were a little grainy in some instances, the sensor quality is excellent for a mid-priced phone.



All photographs by Conchita Fernandes

## INSTAFOLLOW NOW

Dennis Prescott's (@dennistheprescott) mouth-watering photographs of the food that he himself cooks, will leave you wanting for more. Warning, don't visit his feed if you're ravenous!





🔴 The phone does quite a good job at capturing the little details. What you are looking at is a 75% crop of the original photograph.

front camera. Aside from this, it has a lot of features. It comprises of a Manual mode equipped with White Balance, Exposure, ISO and Shutterspeed controls, quite rare at this price point. It also has a Super Resolution mode which enables users to create images of up to 50MP, an HDR and a Low Light mode where the latter lets you shoot 3MP stills. Though the lens isn't very contrasty, it does capture

a decent amount of detail, especially in these modes. Time Lapse and Slow Motion work very efficiently, but Smart Remove is a gimmicky feature. I had fun playing with the Depth of Field feature, but the look of faux blur that is created is not subtle. It would be more rewarding to take the longer process of creating such a look in a dedicated app.

### The Final Verdict

The Zenfone 2 Laser does not deliver on all its promises, but the detail and quality oriented modes are the highlight. The lens is not perfect and images need some tweaking, but the features and photographic control at its price of Rs. 13,999 are quite a handful. 📷

🔴 The camera's super fast burst mode led to the creation of this image. With an output of 100 photographs at a time, I had plenty of shots to choose from! After transferring the images onto a desktop, the phone saves photos shot at burst in separate folders, which makes reviewing less cumbersome.

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### AT A GLANCE

<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>	13MP, 16GB built-in memory (expandable to 128GB), Android 5.0 Lollipop, Qualcomm Snapdragon 4100 processor, 3GB RAM, Rs. 13,999
<b>WHAT WE LIKE</b>	Low light shooting, good detail reproduction
<b>WHAT WE DISLIKE</b>	Overexposed daylight images, average colour rendition
<b>WHY BUY IT?</b>	It is a feature-packed phone with a laser-powered autofocus system, all available at a pocket-friendly price

### FINAL RATINGS

84%

<b>CAMERA FEATURES</b>	Exposure control, touch shutter, rear shutter button	22/25
<b>IMAGE QUALITY</b>	Good image quality, good low light performance	24/30
<b>VIDEO QUALITY</b>	Smooth, detailed video with good sound pickup	13/15
<b>HANDLING</b>	Sturdy and easy to hold	13/15
<b>SPEED &amp; RESPONSIVENESS</b>	Quick phone with occasional AF lag	12/15





Lenovo VIBE Shot

# Great Vibes All Around

A much anticipated camera phone to hit the mid-range segment, the **Lenovo VIBE Shot** claims to be a point and shoot in a cellphone. **Natasha Desai** investigates.

**L**aunched at the Mobile World Congress earlier this year, the Lenovo Vibe Shot finally makes its way to India. Touted as a compact camera in a cellphone, this is Lenovo's attempt to reach the serious photographer and redefine the current segment. And a pretty good attempt it is.

## What it Brings to the Table

A Qualcomm Snapdragon 615 octa-core processor, 3GB RAM along with a 16MP BSI sensor, OIS and a 3000mAH makes it sound like a power packed shooter. And it sure is, the phone is blazing fast, with no lag at any point. The infrared focus is actually great to shoot with and autofocus had no trouble

tracking and locking on and firing instantly in most photographic situations. The phone also comes with a 6-piece lens arrangement producing clear images with minimal flare.

On the side, you will find a dedicated camera button that shoots instantly with a double press. The autofocus here performs admirably as long as there aren't too many subjects at different focal lengths. A toggle switch takes you between the Auto and Pro modes of the camera. The Pro mode offers White Balance, Manual Focus, Shutter speed, ISO and Exposure Compensation control, bundled into an easy-to-use menu. The Manual Focus is particularly accurate and impressive. Other Modes offered under the Pro Mode are Panorama, Art Nightscape,

⚠ While the highlights do get blown out a little, it is nothing too drastic or that cannot be fixed in an image editing app.

⚡ Bright, vibrant and punchy colours straight out of the phone were a joy to view on a big screen.



All photographs by Natasha Desai





📸 This image was shot entirely in Auto mode, which froze the bird's motion at a shutter speed of 1/537sec and aperture of f/2.2

Artistic HDR, Blur Background, Wide Selfie and Golden Years, which is just a fancy way of saying “creative things you can do with a slow shutter speed like light painting and star trails”.

What really took my breath away was the stunning display. The 5-inch, Full HD, 441ppi display is protected by Gorilla Glass 3 and renders punchy near-accurate colours.

### Always Flash-able

Flat, red eyed and ghostly images courtesy cellphone flashes have been something of a sore point with me. That is until I discovered Dual LED flashes such as the one in the One Plus Two, which managed to impress me quite a bit. But leaving the likes of the Dual LEDs far behind is the Vibe Shot's tricolour flash, which produces beautifully fresh images in low light. I used the flash in a bunch of different situations and not once was I disappointed with any outcome.

Another super impressive feature was the Vibe Shot's battery performance. Even after several hours of shooting, the phone's battery was about half way drained. Heating

was a problem but not enough to prevent me from shooting.

### Should You Buy It?

In one very simple word, yes. The phone packs a punch in terms of specs and the camera produces better-than-average results at the Rs. 25,499 price segment. The addition of RAW shooting capability would have completed the package for me. But, at the moment, this phone is a winner for me. **BP**

### AT A GLANCE

<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>	16 MP, 32GBGB inbuilt memory expandable to 128GB, Android 5.1 Lollipop, 64-bit Qualcomm Snapdragon 610 processor with 1.7GHz Octa-core CPUs, 3GB RAM, Rs. 25,499.
<b>WHAT WE LIKE</b>	Infrared autofocus, dedicated camera button, tricolour LED flash
<b>WHAT WE DISLIKE</b>	No RAW capability
<b>WHY BUY IT?</b>	It has great speed phone at a mid-range with above average camera performance and manual control

### FINAL RATINGS

	89%
<b>CAMERA FEATURES</b> OIS, exposure control, infrared autofocus	23/25
<b>IMAGE QUALITY</b> Good image quality with decent low light performance	26/30
<b>VIDEO QUALITY</b> Full HD video	14/15
<b>HANDLING</b> Sturdy with good build	13/15
<b>SPEED &amp; RESPONSIVENESS</b> Speedy autofocus, no lag	13/15



## Oppo R7 Plus

# What's the Plus Factor?

The latest from the lineup of smartphones from **Oppo**, the **R7 Plus** is here to outdo its predecessors. But, how does it fare? **Supriya Joshi** reports.

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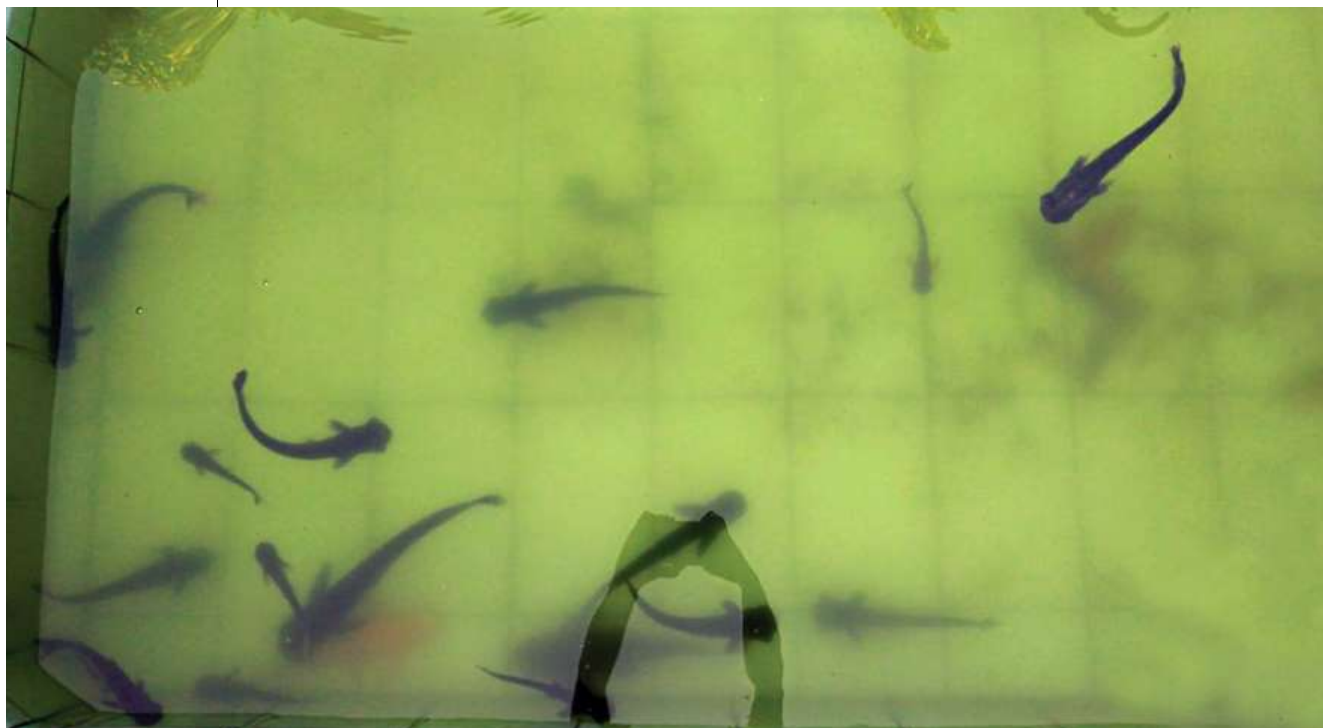
🔴 **The Laser AF is quite accurate as well as speedy. It came in handy in such dynamic situations.**

**T**he mid-range smartphone segment have seen an influx of some really great performers. The lineup of smartphones from Oppo have been consistently good performers, and the recently released R7 Plus is here with a brand new set of features. It runs on ColorOS 2.1, and features a 6-inch Full HD 1080p Super AMOLED display screen. Here's how the sleek-looking phone fared.

### What's On the Device?

The R7 Plus was launched alongside the R7, and is the phablet version of the latter. The phone features a 13MP primary camera with Schneider-Kreuznach optics and a new Sony IMX 278 sensor, the same one found in the Huawei P8. The camera features an f/2.2 aperture as well as Laser AF and a Dual LED flash. The phone also features an 8MP front camera with the Beautify 3.0 mode for 'flawless' selfies.

**You can make GIFs on the Oppo R7 Plus, which are a lot of fun, despite the not-so-great quality.**



All photographs by Supriya Joshi






### Getting Overwhelmed with Features

Oppo has gone all out with the camera modes, because there is a whole plethora of them available. The native camera app itself offers several filters from the get go, and to top it off, there are modes like Ultra HD, which allows you to make 50MP images through multi frame sampling. As exciting as making 52MP images from a cellphone sounds, the feature itself takes too long to process images and this in turn becomes cumbersome, so you end up not using the mode at all.

In the Expert Mode of the phone, you can have manual control over focus, ISO (100–1600), shutter speed (1/2sec–32sec), White Balance and exposure compensation, which is certainly a great addition. There is also a RAW mode. Strangely enough, you cannot manually control the settings on it, even though it would make the most logical sense to.

### As Good as it Gets

Given the amount of attention Oppo has paid to the device, it is clear that it

is targeted at the discerning cellphone photographer. The image quality is really good, and the colour reproduction is accurate as well. The Laser AF is almost always spot on. The video, however, is not the best, specially the audio, which is really quite average. Not having any manual control in the RAW mode is also quite surprising. However, the phone's camera capabilities make up for it. At Rs. 29,990, the phone is a really good buy. 

 What's excellent is the way the lens handles contrast rendition, even when shooting complex, backlit situations. Flaring is there, but controlled and fringing is virtually absent.

### FUN APPS TO TRY

If you are a fan of cellphone filters, you should check out the app POMELO. It is available for free on the Google Play Store, comes with 70+ filters and editing tools like Vignette and Tilt-Shift

### AT A GLANCE

<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>	1.5GHz Octa-Core 64-bit processor, 3GB RAM with 32GB ROM, ColorOS 2.1, 13MP rear and 8MP front camera, 4G ready, metal uni-body, 4100 mAh battery, Rs. 29,990
<b>WHAT WE LIKE</b>	Superb camera device, stylish phone overall
<b>WHAT WE DISLIKE</b>	Average video quality, slow Ultra HD mode, no OIS
<b>WHY BUY IT?</b>	Overall, this is a great cameraphone at quite the attractive price point. It is a good buy for those serious about cellphone photography.

### FINAL RATINGS

89%

<b>CAMERA FEATURES</b>	Plethora of modes, RAW shooting	23/25
<b>IMAGE QUALITY</b>	Great image quality even in low light	28/30
<b>VIDEO QUALITY</b>	Lack of effective stabilisation, poor audio	12/15
<b>HANDLING</b>	The phablet size takes a bit of getting used to for shooting	12/15
<b>SPEED &amp; RESPONSIVENESS</b>	Very quick phone, speedy AF	14/15





### Chandan Khanna

- He is a Delhi-based photojournalist, originally from Allahabad.
- His photo series *Kids "OFF" Tracks* was recently exhibited at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- He spends his free time watching movies, and his favourites include *Gangs of Wasseypur 2*, *Gulaal*, *The Dark Knight* and *Into the Wild*.



Chandan believes that, often when you approach a subject with a lens training at them, there's a faint possibility that some silent moments might get lost.

# A Life full of Stories

Chandan Khanna talks to Tanvi Dhulia about photojournalism and the changing face of storytelling on social media.

#### FIND CHANDAN HERE!

- Instagram: @khannachandan
- Website: [www.chandankhanna.com](http://www.chandankhanna.com)

India is a delight to anyone who raises a camera to their eye. Each time you peer through the viewfinder, you will be presented with vibrant scenes worth releasing the shutter for, almost as though there is a tale to discover at every street corner. Delhi-based photojournalist Chandan Khanna finds himself using his cellphone to make pictures and share bits from the stories he witnesses, while on assignment for Agence France-Presse. For a

genre that, in India, is still deep rooted in the traditional means of shooting and dissemination, Chandan takes a more new-fangled route... his Instagram feed is replete with photos that make you want to take a pause and appreciate the peculiarities of urban India.

#### The Tales of a City

Perhaps, shooting with a cellphone comes naturally to him. Growing up, he would

**"I recognise a moment worth capturing when I witness a scene that makes me want to drop everything I'm doing and observe for some time."**





➡ “When I first began photography, I struggled to find a platform to share my images. Of course, Instagram was there, but the reach wasn’t that vast.”

always be keen to take pictures of friends and family, and at the time his phone was forever handy. He soon became adamant about pursuing photography as his



career, which prompted him to take up a diploma course in Delhi.

Today, his job takes him around the city, allowing him to capture the colourful lives ▶

➡ He usually prefers to see in colour as that’s more true, in his opinion, to the scenes he witnesses.



➡ He strongly believes that every picture a photographer makes is beautiful because everyone’s perception of what is appealing differs greatly.





➔ His keen interest in the news made him choose photojournalism over commercial photography.

of those in Delhi, and presenting his stories to the audience, through the means of one Instagram square at a time.



As a photojournalist, you get little time to spare for any sort of rekeying. "The constant shooting also leads to improvement in the kind of photos you make each day."

### Bringing Important Issues to the Surface

As a photojournalist, his work brings to light troubling situations which may not ▶



"I constantly pester my sister and friends for opinions when I'm contemplating whether to upload a picture. I'm afraid if I ask them one more time, they'll probably kill me!"

➔ Most of his uploads are single images, each with their own stories. However, this picture is part of a series called *Bidi*, which he worked on to highlight the unlawful employment of children in *bidi* factories.





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### Tips on Social Portraiture with Your Cellphone

- **The Closer the Better:** Don't limit yourself by only making pictures of your subjects from a safe distance. It's unlikely that they'll bite. So, go ahead and approach them.
- **Establish a Connection:** Strike up a conversation with the people you're about to photograph. This will help to make them comfortable and natural around you. In all likelihood you might learn of a story to associate with the picture you create.
- **Keep it Real:** Try to keep the image tweaking to a minimum. Avoid filters and let the original colours of the image be.

impact the audience solely through words. Earlier this year, Chandan documented the plight of children working in hazardous conditions at the *bidi* rolling factories of

Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh. Gaining entry into the premises was rather challenging, since the owners are aware of the laws they are violating by employing labour under the permissible age. So, he pretended to be a college student conducting research on the workers' health. "If they were to find out the truth, I would have never gotten out," he recalls.

### Understanding Human Nature

While on the job, once he has shot the pictures he needs for a news story,

➔ **With constant advancements in cameraphone qualities, Chandan feels more and more confident about using them for his assignments.**





Chandan believes that he still has a lot to learn and that his own unique style is a work in progress.

Chandan pulls out his phone to capture a few scenes. "In a lot of situations, the camera is unwelcome," he says. "People get intimidated by the large black box pointed at them, and they tend to respond more aggressively." At times like these, he finds the cellphone useful, as it is discreet. "Probably due to the casualness that we associate with the device, I, too, feel more at ease when I'm making pictures with it."

### Not Child's Play

For Chandan, cellphone photography is serious business, however he believes that it is taken rather lightly. "A lot of people are under the impression that editing tools and filters can compensate for lack of skills."

Chandan often roams the old quarters of Delhi in search of capture-worthy moments.

### INSTAFOLLOW NOW

Watch creativity at its best on the Instagram feed of Japanese photographer Tatsuya Tanaka (@tanaka\_tatsuya) as he brings to life miniature characters.



He tends to be very selective about the subjects he photographs and the images he shares. "Instagram is essentially the place where people see my work."

### Being Grateful

He has a strong sense of gratitude towards this medium. At the time when he was still trying to get a firm grip in the field of photojournalism, mobile photography kept his spirit alive. The appreciation he received through this practice helped him gain faith in his abilities. And it continues to play a pivotal role in his growth as a photographer.

Chandan finds motivation in the thought that if he doesn't take the chance to step out and shoot, he will never get the perfect shot.





# READERS' GALLERY

Better Cellphone Photography's readers were challenged to bring out the vibrant colours of festivals in this month's contest.

Presented by



Winner



## An Explosion of Colour Utkarsh Sharma, Noida

**What made me shoot this:** This photograph was shot in a housing complex, where the residents were celebrating Holi.

The exuberant expressions made me press the shutter.

**What I learnt:** The closer you are to the action, the better it is, especially since phones are unassuming and do not have zoom.

**Shot with:** Sony Xperia Z

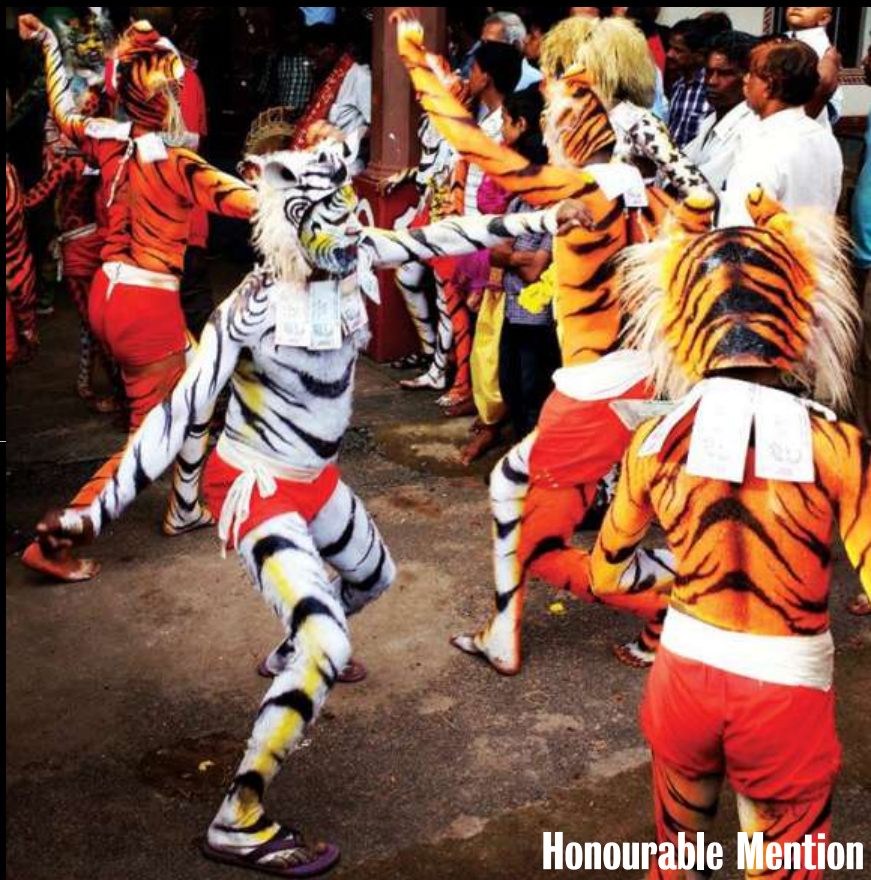


To be featured on these pages, participate in our contests by logging on to [betterphotography.in/contests](http://betterphotography.in/contests) and win exciting prizes!

Doing the Jungle Dance  
Srikanth Samaga, Santhoor

**What made me shoot this:** Right from my childhood, I have always been interested in the vibrant performances of various folk dance. This is what drew me to photograph the Puli Kali festival, when I was in Udipi.

**What I learnt:** When shooting action, take a lot of images, to get the best possible composition, moment and sharpness.  
**Shot with:** Moto G (Gen 3)



Honourable Mention

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GRAND PRIZE

The grand prize winner, gets a 4200mAh Godrej GP PowerBank, the perfect companion for cellphone and travel photographers.



All the nominees will also be featured on [betterphotography.in](http://betterphotography.in).

\*Actual colour of the Powerbank may vary

Honourable Mention



Pointing to the Heavens

Karthik Hatkar, Warangal

**What made me shoot this:** I shot this image at the Chauragarh Mandir in Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh. I found the contrast of the bright red trishuls against the dreary landscape in the background interesting.

**What I learnt:** Shooting the trishuls from a low angle certainly added a different perspective to what would have otherwise been an ordinary image.

**Shot with:** Blackberry Z10

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# AFTER DARK STORIES

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A trombone player plays his melancholic tune as helpless lovers are reunited and lost again. A prostitute resigns herself to her fate while large, chaotic crowds travel in inhumanly packed spaces. A person learns to live with loneliness as a community comes alive with fervour. A dreamer dreams and an old lady cuddles her innumerable dogs.

**Natasha Desai** brings together 12 stories from different walks of life, and invites you to witness the raw depth of human condition, identity and turmoil that come out to play, once the sun goes down.





# Awash with Emotion

Anish Sarai makes use of only dim, available light to bring out the intense feelings of anguish, sadness and despondency that come with separation.

## Keep This in Mind

Printmaking can be particularly challenging in low light photos. Craft is as crucial as the ability to see this light and identify mood.

Everybody can relate to separation. Whether its from a partner, family member or anyone at all. A conversation with a friend—who, like me was going through a separation—gave birth to the idea of externalising these emotions. There was no concrete plan... we just decided to go with the flow and shoot instinctively.

The series was about being true to one's feelings and so, it made perfect sense to stay away from using any kind of additional light or even a reflector. With the use of a high ISO and the subsequent grain, I was able to add another dimension to the loneliness I was trying to portray. Eventually, I ended the series, but in a beautiful way, it was a cathartic experience for both of us.

Indoors, in a private space, felt like the most natural place to be when grieving, and thus, the choice of location.



Elements like scarves intensified the layers between one's loneliness and one's surroundings.



Anish Sarai is a Mumbai-based photographer who shoots fashion, portraits and the streets of India when he is not conceptualising photo stories for his personal work. To view more of his work, you can visit [www.anishsarai.com](http://www.anishsarai.com) or follow him on Instagram (@anishsarai).



# Glimpses of the Uncanny

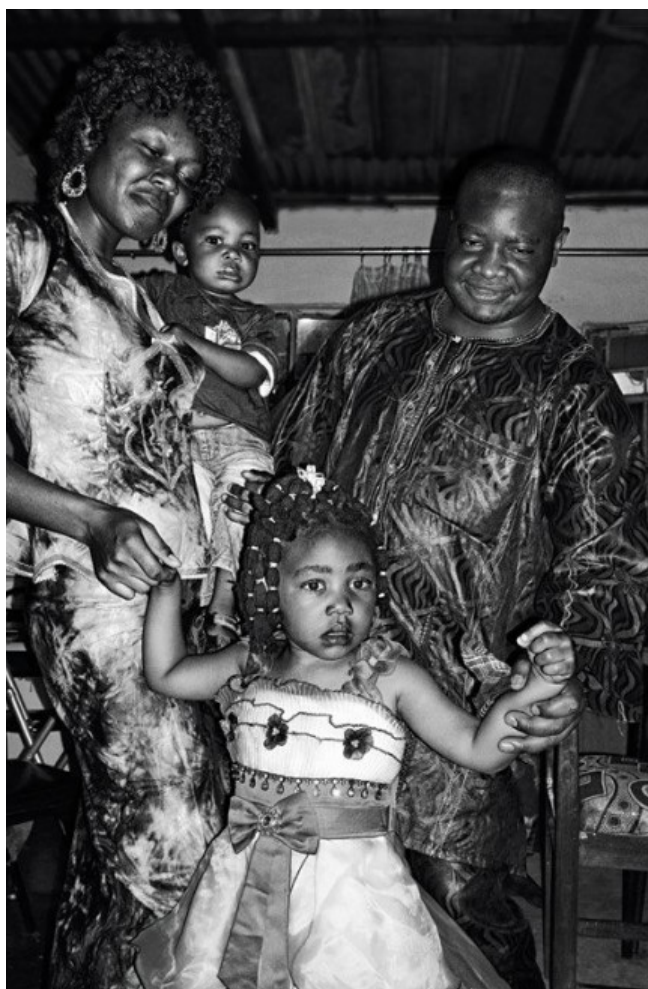
Léonard Pongo photographs life in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in an effort to forge a deep, personal connection to his previously unexplored roots.





⬇ I attended weddings, baptisms, funerals, exorcisms, parties and political rallies. Everything that featured in the daily lives in the Congo.

**H**aving grown up in Belgium, I always felt cut off from my father's Congolese culture. But then, I have always felt the tug to form a bond with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While 2011 saw a rush to document the presidential election and the violence that accompanied this tumultuous time,



I ended up there with a different plan. I wanted to understand daily life in the DRC and become a part of it. So, I spent several months photographing my father's family in the various towns that they lived in.

The political scenario of the time did create a certain kind of energy that may or may not have translated into my images; but I know I chose a completely different approach by deciding not to show these images. My aim was to immerse myself in the daily rather than the exceptional.

⬇ To me, this image represents exactly what the DRC is... a constant state of confusion, being tugged in different directions, just like their gazes are.

⬇ I don't look at the images I produce when I'm shooting. I would rather be talking, looking and interacting with people.





➤ The only way to make memorable portraits is to go way out of your comfort zone and engage with the people you're photographing.

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### A Tool to Tell a Story

Through photography, I was able to explore so many subjects, moments of intimacy, intrigue and connections while translating my feelings visually. All this, in a place where

I felt like I didn't belong. Every image I made was because of an invitation to encounter someone's being, a fleeting moment of their life or an event. A range of emotions have actually made these photographs.

➤ Gradually, I found myself being allowed into the lives of people who were former strangers and assimilate myself as a part of them.







### A Life Forever Changed

Being there challenged my very identity, and I am far from done with the DRC. So far, I have gone there a couple of times for a few months at a stretch. I plan to even make the country my home for a while. My aim was to engulf myself completely

in the daily life in the Congo, which has seeped into my existence. I have a deeper understanding of the country, its complexities, nuances and conflicts. My experience in the Congo is a constant reflection that I seek to explore and understand even more deeply, with time.

🔥 I never like predicting what my final image will look like, I prefer experimenting with different techniques until I feel satisfied.

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### Keep This in Mind

Photographing a culture brings with it a variety of technical challenges. The way you deal with these constraints should involve techniques that you have practised with such rigour that they are within your natural flow. Spending too much time poring into the camera's menu is the first distraction that would rob your scene of any intimacy.



Léonard Pongo graduated from Maastricht University and has worked in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and is currently focusing on South-East Asia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His long-term project 'The Uncanny' started in the DRC in 2011 and will also be exhibited at the Delhi Photo Festival 2015.





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The latest Tamil flick will thrill and chill, he promises as he rides his cycle around the city coaxing people to visit the local cinema hall.



# As These Lives Fade Away

Selvaprakash Lakshmanan documents the dying light that settles over professions that were once the pillars of a sustainable society in India.

Until about a decade ago, my mornings would begin with the ringing of the milkman's cycle bell, as he came to our doorstep to refill the bottle left outside each day. The cries of the candy seller announcing his treats would drive children into a frenzy every evening. Old knives were resharpened and made usable again, as were cracked pots and pans. Such were the scenes that dominated the landscapes of Indian

⌚ The whirring noise of the motor and the metallic sound of the blade being sharpened have lessened as the time goes by.

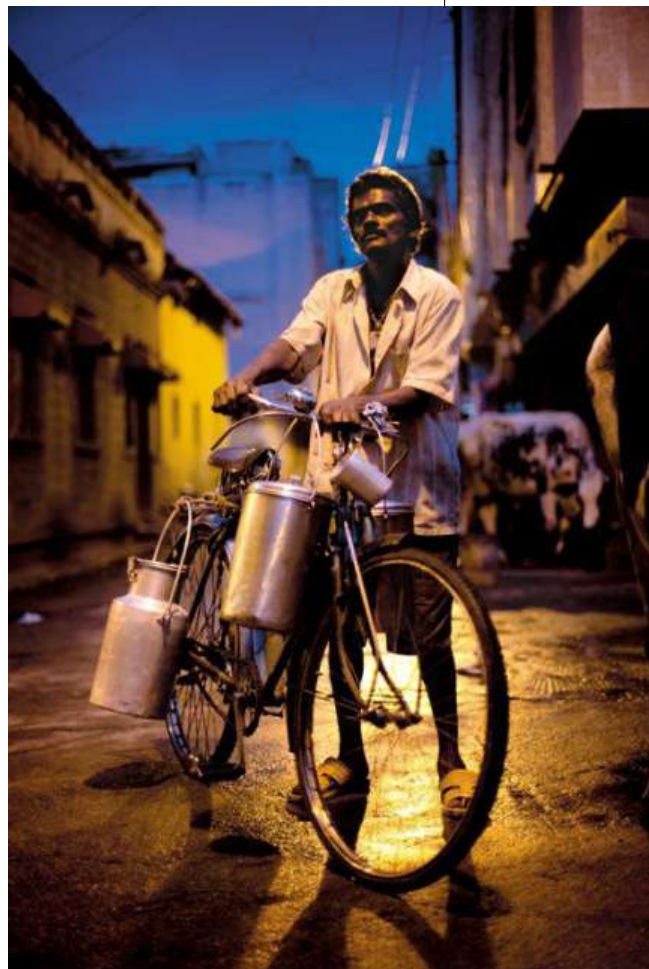
towns up till recent times. Reusing and recycling was simply a way of life, much before it became a topic of activism.

What began as an assignment for *Time Out* magazine, eventually continued long after, as I realised I was documenting professions that future generations may not have heard about.

## From Dawn to Dusk

My entire approach was to shoot these professionals—who begin early in the

⌚ The milk can clangs against the bicycle as the milkman makes his way up the streets on misty mornings.



**Keep This in Mind**

Consistency of craft is a great virtue while doing such works, which puts forth the importance of previsualisation and shooting discipline. You may also need to postprocess carefully, to bring a single image within the vision of the larger body of work.

64

➡ His cries of his wares could make most children and even some adults excited, such was the eagerly awaited presence of the candy man.



morning, at the time they were winding up for the day. I shot in the evenings during the monsoon, as the skies were dramatic and piercingly blue, with only sodium vapour lamps to light up my subject.

As the light waned during each shoot, I hoped to bring some respect for the faceless individuals in these declining trades and create something that is larger, impactful and meaningful.

*Selvaprakash Lakshmanan (@selvaprakashl on Instagram) is based in Bengaluru and has been the Chief Photographer with publications like Dinakaran, DNA and Time Out. He had won the India Press Photo Award in 2008.*





📍 In a mall, one is surrounded not only by the physical space but the endless barrage of strategically placed visual communication—which is telling you what to wear, how to be, what you should look like, and how you ought to live.

# The Psyche of a Mall

Natasha Hemrajani explores the space of a mall, its physical and psychological impact on the throngs of people who visit them.

65

**D**uring a one-week-long art residency at Palladium, a posh shopping arcade in Mumbai, I began what I tentatively call *The Mall Series*. I was invited to set up an artist's studio in a well frequented area of the mall and make images around the concept of luxury.

## Two Kinds of Architecture

I have always been interested in spaces and wanted to use a new, experimental language to document my impressions of living inside a mall for an entire week. The series is a culmination of the two different types of structures and signages I observed. One being the actual physical concrete structure. The other, the psychological architecture of the subconscious, racial and aspirational imagery.

## One Single Consolidated Space

In malls, both these architectures are inexorably married. Using a series of multiple exposures, I created photograph

s where these two architectures merged, and the psychological mall and the physical one became one.

📍 The final artwork is as layered as the message they are trying to convey.



## Keep This in Mind

Your tool of choice comes secondary to your vision, thoughts and observations. The cellphones of today allow us to create meaningful and technically competent photos. There are difficulties, but also new opportunities to facilitate one's way of seeing.

Natasha Hemrajani (@natashahemrajani on Instagram) works out of Mumbai. In the past, she has worked as the Photo Editor at Grazia magazine and as a photojournalist at The Hindustan Times. Her work has been featured in publications like BBC, Top Gear, Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Marie-Claire.

diển tôi muốn được cho qua đình, tôi điếu  
 tôi lấy trăm hồ lần, làm tôi thối mồi đi  
 tôi su khải đây phải trả diển này họ thì mới  
 anh hiểu không, anh nói với tôi là không  
 hình tôi ở đây nhà nếu là  
 nếu anh thương tôi còn anh  
 tôi nên lo lắng điều này.

# Adversity & Dreams by a River

Drawn by the haunted look of a street prostitute he stumbled upon in Cambodia, Ian Flanders found himself doing everything he could, both creatively and personally, to help the women facing abuse and despair while caught in the web of sex trade.

**W**hen I first visited Phnom Penh, Cambodia, I was sure I wanted to pursue a photographic project there. My chance meeting with a prostitute by the river bank showed me the ruthless desperation that haunts the city.

## A Matter of Trust

Without a doubt, the most difficult thing was to earn the trust of these women. They were scared of the consequences of allowing me to photograph them, within the shacks that were the brothels. It took me two years and several visits to gain their





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**If I was caught taking photos of the women by the traffickers, the repercussions would have been beatings and possible death for the women.**

trust. The first time I visited Anh, she broke down, cried and curled herself into a foetal position begging me to do what every other man does. Succumbing to the abuse was that lesser of two evils in her mind. If I were to submit, which in her world was easier to deal with, I would have shattered any hope of her believing I was different from any other man she has had to deal with.

I witnessed several moments of sickness, self harm and abuse that made this much more than a photography project.

#### **Understanding the Manacles**

Simply wanting to help these women, or even proving that to them was not enough.

Their cultural beliefs, realities and sense of duty held them back from accepting any kind of help. More so, they felt they had no reason to trust me.

#### **Opportunity is Not Enough**

I chose not to publish these photos as a complete story, until a raid was performed by a local NGO. The story needed that ending—a sense of hope, but more importantly, it was the least I could do for those women as my actions put those women at risk of serious harm. As of November 2014, eight women and three children were rescued along with the arrest of two traffickers. Unfortunately, several

“I borrowed money in advance for my family, I have owed them a lot of money, up to seven hundred dollars. Have to work until the end of the month to get pay. If I want to get out of here, I have to pay all of my debt; do you understand? You promise me that my picture here would not be published in newspaper otherwise death is on the way, if you have compassion on me you take me back to Australia, then that's no problem. I am really worried about this.”

Hồi với anh là hai chị em/ ruột cùng một mẹ  
Sinh ra anh hiểu họ



➡ “Anh and I are two sisters and were born by the same mother, do you understand?”

HN

Sẽ có chuyện đến rồi và sẽ bị  
⑪ đánh và ở được Rồi khi  
⑫ Nếu như chả tiền thì  
ở đây mạnh Lắm Lắm



66

➡ “Something would happened to me, and I would be beaten up and not allowed to abandon here. If paid up, there should be no trouble. Over here is very powerful, can't fight them.”

iết suy nghĩ của cô về nỗi đau khổ?

nỗi đau như đống đờ Tới Là... Tới bị đánh Tới  
bỏ đời và con Tới, nhưng đời Thì... Sau Tới đi lại  
cho con của Tới vì nó cần và... Tới...  
mà cũng Tới nghèo nên... Tới...  
đời, nhưng cái nghèo này là... Tới...  
cho Tới... Tới cũng đánh... Tới...  
đi mong một ngày nào đó... Tới...  
để Tới... Tới... Ta... Tới...  
bên cạnh con của Tới và mẹ của Tới



➡ Her husband left her and her child, which she has accepted as her arrangement from God. Her only wish is to repay her debt so that she can go back and live with her mother and child.



**Keep This in Mind**

Repeated visits, sometimes, even without a camera, not only help you gain trust, but will also help you gauge the light conditions and technical difficulties that you have to battle. This goes a long way in planning one's visual approach.

đôi lần ở đây tôi một tháng, mới đi đến một lần, như mua của cũ đi đến một lần, anh về sớm tôi ở  
 qn anh là một người tốt họ  
 Nam không này tôi thật sự  
 nhớ về anh mỗi ngày, tôi chưa  
 rời xa sự như ý, mới chưa  
 tôi rất nhớ anh, đến ở viết  
 lại quá, đến, họ nên đáp  
 anh rất nhiều,



⚡ This light was there only for one period of my visit, which compelled me to include it in my series, even though it stands out from the other images.

women returned to the trade as it was all they knew. However, the children are receiving education and support that will hopefully make a positive impact. I wouldn't say that waiting three years to release the

photos was a challenge... understanding why it took so long to rescue enslaved and trafficked women was the challenge, for me. Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

⬆ She appreciated all the help I gave her friend in her text and said she would miss me as I had been a good friend to her.



A self-taught documentary photographer from Australia, Ian Flanders seeks to challenge himself and others with what he sees through his lens. He attempts to engage and confront his viewers with the reality in his photos. His work will be shown at the Delhi Photo Festival 2015.



Most of the women wear traditional Indian clothes, but this one lady always wore a dress or a skirt, making her all the more intriguing.

70

# These Beautiful Lives...

Curious about the small community of Bene Israel Jews in Ahmedabad, Bindi Sheth documents the preservation of their cultural identity within the diversity of India.

⬇ Considering how small the community is, they make sure to come together in the evenings to celebrate their various festivals.

Growing up in a multi-cultural city like Mumbai, one is able to recognise certain communities based on certain typical quirks and characteristics. What struck me the most about the Bene Israel Jewish community was how difficult it was to

find a defining characteristic about them. When I moved to Ahmedabad and learnt about this microscopic community through author Esther David, I was extremely intrigued. The two of us then began documenting how they held on to their cultural identity.

⬇ When in the synagogue, the men wear yarmulke (skull caps) and prayer shawls.







The one time that I was not allowed to shoot on the lower level of the synagogue, I ended up making the best image of my series.





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📍 I made sure I attended every one of their festivals and gatherings over the course of the time that I spent shooting them.

### Gaining Acceptance

*"They gather in quiet coherence at the synagogue. The young and the old celebrate life and rituals with equal enthusiasm and vitality.*

*Sundry humans transform with the wearing of kippahs into hardcore Jews.*

*I watch.*

*I pray.*

*I shoot.*

*I quietly absorb and observe their lives*

*Different, yet mergeable*

*The quiet synagogue becomes lively after 7 pm*

*Sometimes sounds of different religions enter the synagogue.*

*A thick-bonded community.*

*They took their time to let me into their secret and innocent lives."*

These are a few lines that I wrote about my experience shooting with the Bene Israel Jewish community.

They are incredibly small in number, with only about 150 of them living in Ahmedabad. The community primarily speaks Marathi, as they originally came to India through Alibaug, Maharashtra. Even though I spoke the language very haltingly, it was good enough to gain some acceptance.

### Keep This in Mind

One may use different techniques or styles to get past technical limitations like low light, but technique must never precede subject matter. Works like these, especially, demand simplicity, which, strangely enough, is often difficult to achieve.





### The Big Fat Jewish Indian Wedding

I find that the true characteristic of any religion comes out through its weddings. And the Bene Israel Jewish weddings are just as food fuelled, big and bright as other communities in India. There are several influences such as the jewellery, the *mehendi* ceremonies and the use of Indian objects during various rituals. While their culture is alive and thriving, there is an assimilation with India that is endearing.



*Bindi Sheth learnt photography from architect-photographer Dinesh Mehta and has received many awards for photography. For the last three years, Bindi Sheth has worked closely with author Esther David on a photographic documentation of the Bene Israel Jewish community of Ahmedabad.*



Kiran Patel's love for dogs began as a teenager and once she moved to Ahmedabad, she began adopting them with vigour.

# An Unconditional Love

Kannagi Khanna spends a delightful time photographing a retired dancer who has opened up her home to over 50 dogs, in Ahmedabad.



A lot of the dogs that she has adopted were ones that were abandoned by their owners.

**K**iran Patel, or 'Kutte Wali Aunti' as she is locally known, is 80 years old and a beloved fixture in her locality. Her small house is home to an assortment of over 50 dogs with an additional 30 dogs, who drop in for a meal or a friendly gambol and bark.

**You find a lot of sleeping, eating and happiness when you step into her house.**

## The Chaos of the Inside

Aunt's house is small with only a window or two per room. It's a place of slow relaxation where she is usually asleep, as are most of the dogs. You are in constant danger of stepping on a paw or a tail, no matter where you go. Two gangs of dogs have taken over either room, while





➡ With so many nooks and crannies, one was unsure of what one would find hidden away.

cats have made themselves comfortable in the shelves and little cupboards that line the walls of her house.

### Not Just a Photo Project

When I first heard about Auntie and her dogs, I couldn't wait to get in touch and


photograph her life. It was a simple and fun documentation of a lady who leads a very inspirational life, with little or no help from anyone. Over time, I realised that I do want to help her take care of the dogs, and one way to do that is through a book that I plan to create soon.

### Keep This in Mind

Domestic stories may sometimes seem unappealing because of the apparent lack of visual drama, but it is usually these that make for the most incredibly intimate of moments and narratives.

➡ When I first visited the house, the dogs barked incessantly at my presence, but I'm an accepted part of their lives now.





As the light fell on the window in front of me, the house in the background lit up by chance adding depth to my frame.

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# When the Sounds Lead You

Shiv Kiran lets go of a set shooting plan and gives in to his surroundings. Even though the environment may be challenging, he finds that one can always listen for beauty.

## Keep This in Mind

Torches are oft forgotten, but invaluable. To help focus, light paint, direct beams of illumination or find the way and not stumble!

When you visit Ladakh, one of the first things you realise is just how much the place takes away from you. Stark, pure beauty surrounds you but the terrain is harsh and distances long. I almost always found myself in transit when the light was good, instead of being at the places I wanted to shoot.

## On Not Being Rigid

While I had a set shooting plan in my head, I decided to eventually let go of it. The beauty of the place started seeping into me and as we sat one night around a bonfire, I found myself completely lost in the sounds all around. A river gushing by, a dog barking in the distance, footsteps shuffling filled my head, reminding me of dreams that I've had.



### Making the Most of the Dark

The entire series of photographs is based on these reverberations and how they relate to my dreams. I started walking around, simply following these sounds.

Once I figured out what I wanted, I would shine light using a torch. This I found, was far easier to control than using a flash, and was able to give me the raw, unpolished look that I had in my head.

🔦 When you are shooting in the dark, it is easy to keep the attention on your subject and cut out unnecessary distracting elements.



The creak of the gate fascinated me. To make the frame even more interesting, I shone light on the tree.



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*Shiv Kiran discovered photography in his post graduation days. His passion for the medium grew as he joined hands with photographer Arnav Rastogi, learning from him. He is a part of the collective Fseven and also managed their Instagram feed (@fsevenphotographers), along with his personal feed (@shivkiran).*



# Everyday Words & Love Songs

Raj Lalwani contemplates the intrinsic ties that bind the brass musicians of Goa to their faith, sense of identity and belonging in a dwindling culture.





I was late for my meeting with Santan and the sun had gone down. The field behind his house where he practises, pitch black. "It's okay," he said, "just listen to me play," but then I found a torch, and there he was, in the limelight of his memories.

**"The word is musician," I was corrected by one of them, "not bandwallah."**

**T**he room belongs to Rui Lobo's cat, Ceul. She creates music by walking over the keyboard and producing a single note on a guitar when she bites off a string. She sleeps on sheet music, eats sheet music and of course, plays with sheet music. Tom, on the other



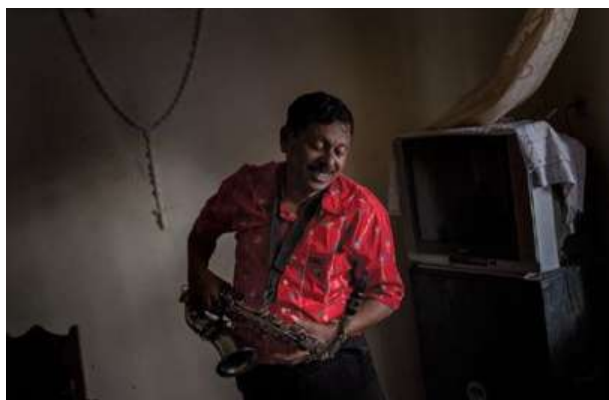
hand, perches himself on Francis Avezado's shoulder as he tries to make sense of the seven brass instruments that are strewn around. His personal favourite is the piccolo. It is as small as him and he is not scared of it. Tom is Avezado's pet crow.

These fringe characters are often as important than the ones in the lead, in the Marquezian world of Goa's brass musicians. But it was the players themselves who intrigued me to listen beyond their immediate worlds, to see beyond their songs.

➤ The oldest musician in Goa could barely stand, but when he held the sax, his eyes had a gleam and his fingers, purpose.

➤ Nathaniel played me a tune while taking a break from classes, and his parents beamed with pride, worried though, how he'd balance music with 12th class studies.





An old man caresses his rusty trombone while he narrates stories of the fifties, when he played drums for the active cabaret scene in Bombay; a 17-year-old fears that his upcoming Board exams will not allow him to spend enough time with his music.

Not too far from the obnoxious tourist of the typical Goan beach, there is a land, a little like an alternate universe, playing out time with its head turned back. In my photographic practice, I have always gravitated towards the idea of memory and nostalgia, longing and belonging. The act of making a picture, for me, is a process of looking back, as it was, for

**The idea of seeing everyday words as love songs... to romanticise... that, for them, is their music, that, for me, my photography.**





➤ When Abdonio looked at my camera, he probably looked within. Tales from Bombay of the fifties, and newer ones from Goa today, his trombone seemed to reminisce with a longing for time that had gone by.

these musicians, I realised, when one of them played me *La Vie en Rose*, a calm sense of wistfulness on his face.

It felt strange, sometimes, accompanying them from the reverie of a local feast to a neighbourhood cemetery, where a funeral would see their solemn tunes. Was it ever conflicting, I wondered, but every tune was a prayer, they'd say, a prayer to their practice.

It was inside their homes that I realised how intrinsically their music is linked to their lives, their art is all heart. Light does

funny things in a Goan home, creeping in from places you wouldn't expect, and caressing, delicately. Almost as if someone's turned down the lights, and given this community a warm hue of sentimentality.

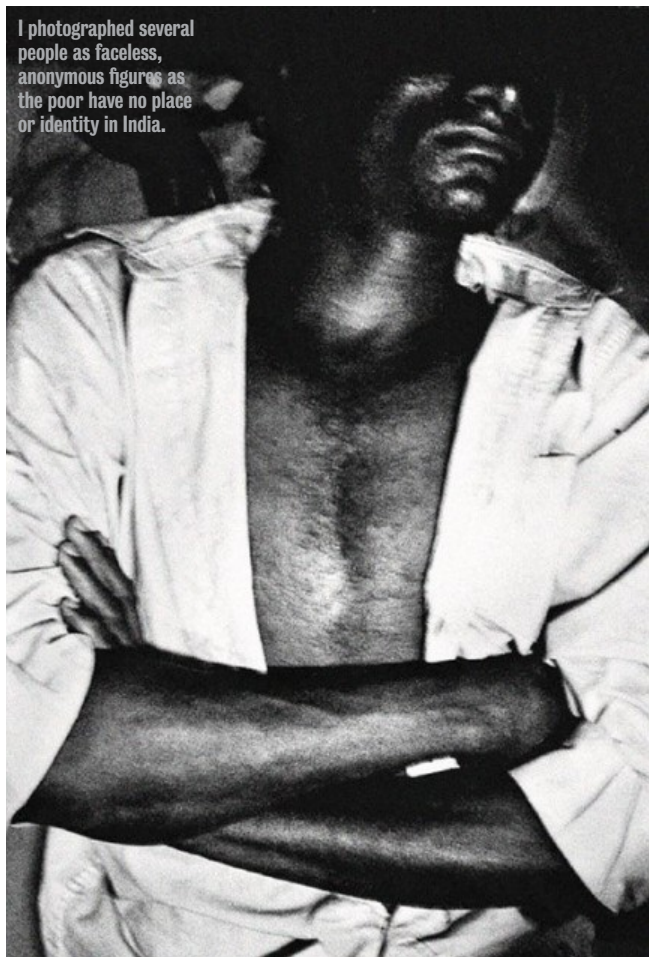
It is a dying art, their music of everyday words and songs of love and loss. All of Goa has only one trombone player, and a few scores that play the trumpet and the sax. But like hopeless lovers trying to keep a memory alive, they prefer to look at their world with rose-tinted glasses.

### Keep This in Mind

The great S Paul recently said that with modern-day sensors, photography is now about available darkness. Mood is what's most important. Less light is sometimes more.

Raj (@lookdoyousee on Instagram) describes himself as a work in progress. Assistant Editor of BP, he was part of the 2014 Shortlist of the APA/Lucie Foundation Scholarship and a recipient of the Neel Dongre Awards/Grants for Excellence in Photography, for which, this work was made. Raj lives in Bombay, not Mumbai.

I photographed several people as faceless, anonymous figures as the poor have no place or identity in India.



I used whatever little available light there was to my advantage, to deepen the mysterious feel of the photographs.



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# Coming Up to Breathe

Ronny Sen presents a claustrophobic look at the Indian Railways, while on his travels across the country, surrounded by throngs of people packed together.

**W**henever I find myself travelling long distance on the Indian Railways, there are two lines by Ezra Pound that come to mind.

*"The apparition of these faces in the crowd,  
Petals on a wet, black bough."*

(from the poem *In a Station of the Metro*). These lines weigh on me as I witness compartments of humans crammed tightly together, almost unable to breathe.

## The Great Indian Experience

When I was studying, I would want to travel as inexpensively as possible, which meant that I would often find myself in the unreserved General compartment of the train, with people from all over packed together. While India today stands divided

by intolerance, the poorest travellers have no such notions. Everyone coexists with each other in extremely confined spaces in what is a confluence of different lives. I wanted to show human conditions that one doesn't see every day. I wanted to show the suffocated, pressing crowds of people being robbed of breath as they made their way through the breathtaking contradictions of this country.

## As the Darkness Sets In

This series of images is a simple exploration of the nights in a train compartment. Indian train stations are crazy and chaotic during the day. You lose yourself in this mess, becoming yet another faceless entity. But come the night, there is an almost death-like quiet that

## Keep This in Mind

The visual treatment goes a long way in conveying the mood of the scene that you are photographing. Choices of colour versus black and white, manipulation of light and tonality all contribute to the emotion of the setting.





➡ The commuters are so lost within their chaos that they were mostly not aware of me photographing them.

settles in. People wind down and let their tiredness take over. It doesn't matter who is sitting next to them, postures become relaxed and heads loll back usually falling on another's shoulder. The night is when

humans are at their rawest. In a way, this was an autobiographical exploration too, as I was not just a detached observer but very much an involved traveller, very much a part of the chaos and muddle.

➡ The stifling conditions of the railway's general compartments have remained unchanged for decades.



Ronny Sen (@ronnysen on Instagram) lives and works in Salt Lake City, Calcutta, where he lives and works. He made his first artist book 'Khmer Din' in 2013. He has received awards by Sony World Photography Awards, National Geographic magazine and United Nations amongst others.

# Of Ardent Love

**Zishaan Akbar Latif** crafts a visual tale of two individuals consumed by a torrid affair and the love, loss and longing that lingers on.



**Keep This in Mind**

Trust your instincts. Storytelling after dark may result in photographic 'mistakes', surprises, experiments and accidents, that flow beautifully with any organically created work.

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**T**here is something incredibly moving about shooting the human body and pure emotion. My first foray into shooting nudes featured two friends who wanted to be photographed real and raw. Their love and our combined ideas of exploring the themes of loss and longing resulted in a night of beautiful

photographic experimentation. The story we wanted to tell went beyond just infatuation or physical attraction.

With very controlled sources of light, I knew that visually I wanted images where the contrast only enhanced the passion that I was photographing. The film and grain only added to the layers and textures of meaning that the tale held for us.

**Photographed over one night, my friends danced and explored the space that we were in, in an organic, raw and unadulterated way.**

*Zishaan (@zishaanakbarlatif on Instagram) has been an independent photographer since 2005 and an independent videographer since 2011. His style is intuitive, passionate, personal and sometimes eclectic. His work has been featured in both commercial and non-commercial collections, exhibitions and publications worldwide.*





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# A World of Magic Within

Marja Pirilä makes surreal and contemplative environmental portraits using a room as a camera obscura, through which she brings the exterior surroundings into the home.

**B**eing able to capture the image of a person, their room... and the view from their window was an almost epiphany-like idea that I had; after I saw some black and white images by Abelardo Morell. In a room converted into a camera obscura, I could capture these three crucial elements, which I found to be an all-encompassing way to photograph a person's living environment. While this originally began as a documentary idea, it soon took a different direction. The pictures were not just about their living environments, but also a reflection of memories, fears and dreams.

## Light and Dark


I would darken my subject's room completely by covering the windows with black plastic. On top of a small hole that I'd cut out, I would place a lens. In this simple way, I managed to change the exposure

time of a few hours to a few minutes, enabling me to photograph human subjects instead of just spaces.

With this arrangement, the entire view outside the person's room is projected upside down into the room, which I then photograph with a regular camera.

It is almost impossible to see what is happening when the room is darkened. This worked advantageously as my subjects felt comfortable and were able to sit for the portraits without any preconceived inhibitions.

## Untold Surprises

Due to how dark the room becomes and the unpredictability of light, it is difficult to gauge what the scene outside would finally look like. However, I was always as excited when I saw the way the light carried into the darkness of the room. The tiny details of the scenery outside brought the images alive. 

## Keep This in Mind

Use a technique once and it may be novelty. But delve your heart and life into a particular process, style or way of seeing and it could be the single greatest thread that binds your work and identifies it.





Even though I had decided to make a portrait with my neighbour, I could complete it only in Fall, once the leaves had fallen off the tree outside.



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➔ Initially, this image was going to be pretty bleak and stark, but my subject's stockings coupled with the projection of the bare branches of the trees made it the image ten times more interesting.

*Marja Pirilä has worked intensively with the camera obscura technique—at once simple and magical—since 1996. She has also designed and constructed many kinds of three-dimensional camera obscuras with photographer Petri Nuutinen. Her work is part of several private and public art collections across Europe.*



**Brooke Shaden**, in her own words, was 'photographically' born in December 2008 with Bachelor's degrees in Film and English. She blends elements of fine-art photography, self-portraiture and multiple exposures into her vivid imagination to warp space and time within her creations. You can view more of her work on her website, [www.brookeshaden.com](http://www.brookeshaden.com)

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ON ASSIGNMENT

# Finding Reality

Brooke Shaden's images reconstruct reality with a tinge of fantasy that defies gravity and the continuum.

🔗 I prefer timeless costumes devoid of patterns. I also like rich or desaturated colours.

**W**hen I started photography seven years ago, I had a faint idea of what I wanted to say with my images. I had an odd fascination with darkness and death, but I was very drawn to beautiful things at the same time. This cohabitation of the pleasing and the perplexing, I sought to share with others.

## My Perspective

As time went on, I expanded my mission. I no longer only wanted to photograph

darkness, but to bring my imagination to life. I realised that my work would be more rich and exciting if I could bring my visions outside of my body and

## My Assignment

**Description:** Figuring out how our world can be transformed into something more inspiring.

**Duration:** I created these images over the course of five years.

**Notes:** Shooting takes between 5 and 20 minutes. Editing can take from 2 to 20 hours depending on the image, often averaging at about 5 hours.



📌 Most of my images are self portraits, but sometimes I use models. For this image, I spent hours wrapping her and the tree in red yarn.

recreate physical interpretations of it. I began reminiscing about ideas that turned gravity on its head, with the aid of photography. I was fascinated by subjects repeating in an image multiple times, within coloured locations I had visualised.

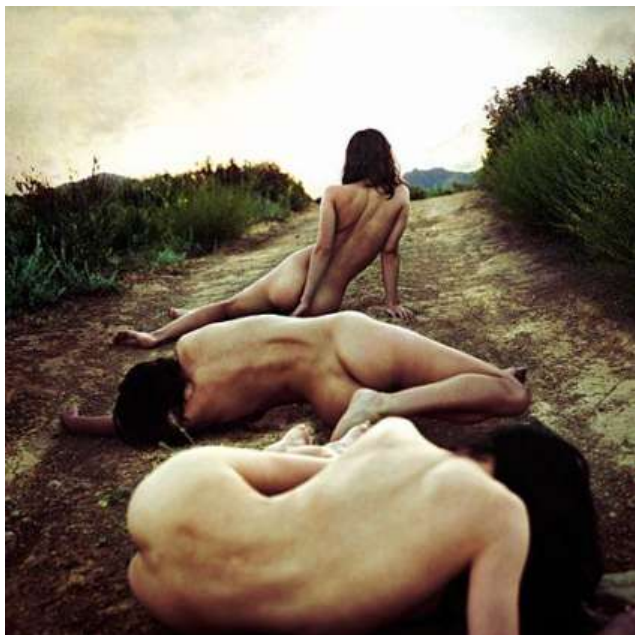
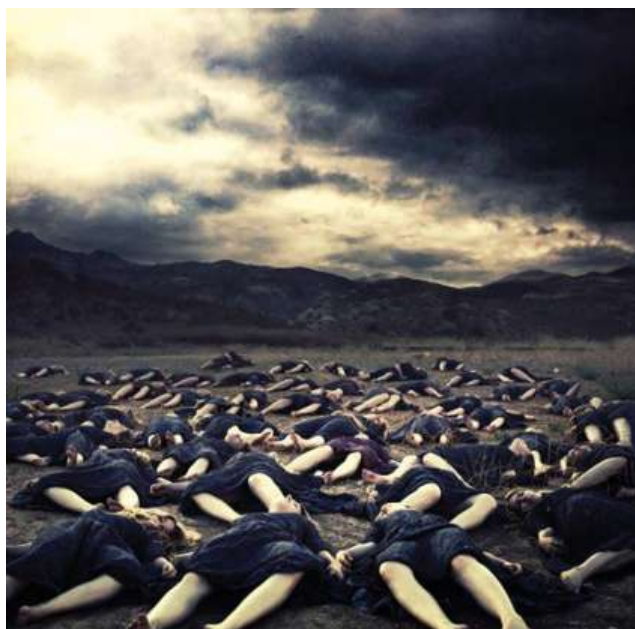
When I begin planning a shoot of this nature, I think about the message I want to convey. For me, it is about saying, "Yes, this might look neat, but how will

the viewer be affected by it?". Once I have figured out my motivation, I can move on to the process. I try to never limit myself by how something can be done, and to not get discouraged when I come across an idea that may seem difficult to realise. Once I figure out the process, I go about procuring the props and costumes, or choosing a location, and then I find my character.

**Photographic vision can give even the wildest of fantasies a tangible form. Imagination is limitless, and so is its realisation.**







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➦ The multiple exposure of me lying down in a field was one of the hardest to shoot. I had to lie down, trigger my camera, and then move to the next position about hundred times in order to find fifty that worked. By the end of the shoot, I was so nauseous and dizzy from standing up and sitting down over and over that I had to lie there for another twenty minutes to recover!

### The Process

Most of these images were shot as simply as you could imagine. I usually do not need much time because of the minimal equipment I use and because the idea is already fleshed out. My shoot involves one person posing as much as is physically possible, and the rest of the photograph captured in separate images, to be stitched together later in editing. Some of the images are more straightforward.

While some of my photographs require editing, I prefer doing as much as I can within the camera. Editing, though, is where I do have most of my fun. I can spend hours lost in it. They usually come

together rather simply since I try to do all of the thinking beforehand, so that the images blend seamlessly.

I use Adobe Photoshop, and my favourite tools are layer masking, curves, and lasso. You can use almost any version

### Tips To Keep In Mind While Making Composite Images

- **Take your Time:** Planning can take anywhere from 30 minutes to 5 months, depending on how personal the image is, how difficult the shooting process will be, and how much editing might be required.
- **Make Way for your Imagination:** Break down the process as much as possible. Shooting the images in small pieces and reassembling them presents a wide range of possibilities.
- **Troubleshoot in Advance:** Anticipate problems, such as losing light while shooting outdoors. Carrying spare props might prove helpful in case something goes poorly on set.



### My Equipment

When I started shooting these images, I was using a Nikon D80. I later upgraded to a Canon EOS 5D Mark II, which I still shoot with. I am not very particular about my gear, since I firmly believe that we should create with what we have, no matter what. However, I am quite loyal to my 50mm Zeiss lens. Since I create so many self portraits, a good tripod is necessary, and I use a 3 Legged Thing tripod.



🔴 I photographed my arms, hair, legs and dress all separately to piece them together later. I could have done it all in one shot if I had a harness or a mattress underneath me, but I didn't!

of Adobe Photoshop, or even GIMP, to access these tools, and that is how I like it.

For me, the most important part is knowing what I want to say and how I want to say it before I pick up the camera.

There are times when I go out with my camera and find inspiration in the heat of the moment, but for the most part I find confidence in planning. It has been

my experience that with photographic vision, even the wildest imagination can be transformed into reality. The more you know why you are doing something, the more likely others are to connect with what you're creating. I have had that proven to me time and time again. It is my litany. 📷

— As told to Sachin Sai

🔴 I often use a corner of my house as my studio, or some other space where I can be alone with my process.

🔴 I never want to see anything modern in a location. If I find a building to shoot in it either has to be blank, like white walls, or abandoned.

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# Q & A

Want your doubts cleared? Write to  
The Editor, Better Photography,  
Network18 Media & Investments Ltd,  
One Indiabulls Centre, Unit No 501, Fifth Floor, Tower I,  
Jupiter Textile Mills, Senapati Bapat Marg,  
Elphinstone Road, Mumbai-400 013, Maharashtra, India.

E-mail: [editor@betterphotography.in](mailto:editor@betterphotography.in)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/betterphotography](https://www.facebook.com/betterphotography)  
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## BRIEFLY

### What is meant by reciprocity failure?

For a given intensity of light, the camera's shutter speed and aperture determine a correct exposure of that light to the sensor, thus enabling a constant exposure value in the image. At extremely low or high levels of light, when the shutter speeds are either very long or short, or at expanded ISO settings, the sensor's receptivity to light decreases, thus causing deviations from the correct or constant exposure value. This is reciprocity failure.

## Of Strobes and Flashes

What is the stroboscopic effect? How is it different from a flash?

**Rajkiran Gupta, Noida, via email**



Kevin K



Samira Pillai

A rudimentary camera flash produces a bright spark of luminescent flash for a single instant. On the other hand, the strobe has traditionally been used to produce a quick succession of such flashes at periodic intervals, and is used for a slightly longer duration. However, flash guns used in cameras these days can double up to perform the both functions. Another difference between the strobe and flash functions is that in a strobe, the total energy from the source is distributed across the number of instances the subject has to be illuminated in a given period of time.

➔ While the use of a flash (left) freezes the frame, a strobe (right) captures successive frames in one image.

## Winter is Coming

How do I ensure my camera stays in shape while shooting during extreme winters?

**Akshay Chalikwar, Nagpur, via email**

Abrupt changes in the temperature can cause condensation inside the camera, though this is temporary. So is the case with touchscreens, which may not function momentarily since they are thermally sensitive. While most cameras are built to be resilient to such changes, working in freezing conditions requires certain precautionary measures. Care must be taken to keep the batteries warm, since they perform poorly under extremely cold conditions. This might cause problems with the flash gun, or if your camera uses an LCD screen. Avoid getting any part of your camera wet or frosty.

## Shooting Abroad

How do I secure my equipment while travelling in India, and abroad?

**Sourav Das, Jamshedpur, via email**

Maintain an inventory of your equipment. This includes a list of names, serial numbers and prices. Even when you are about to travel abroad, make sure you possess the required documentation for all the equipment you carry with you. This must include, in addition to the inventory mentioned above, bills for all the purchases, which must be declared at the airport's customs desk after immigration.

## HOW TO

### Attach Your Camera Strap

Any form of photography that involves a lot of walking around requires the photographer to move about with ease. A camera strap comes in handy in such cases, and with some simple rules, it can be attached to provide the maximum comfort and accessibility.

#### Determine the Length

For a light-weight camera, a neck strap can be used without much discomfort, so that it is just below your chest. If you're using a heavy camera, and for shoots of long duration, it is advisable to use a side-slung shoulder strap, so that it hangs a little above the flank.

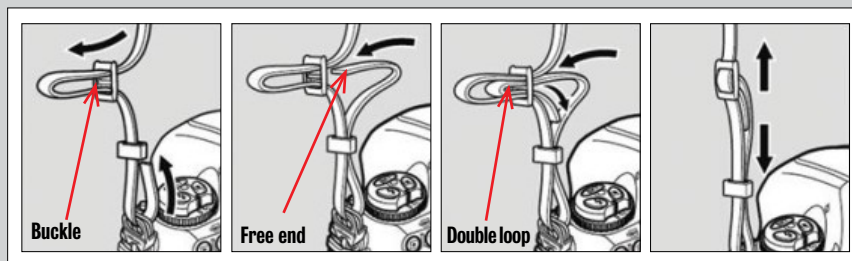
#### Buckling it Right

The free end of the strap must pass through the metal ring provided in the camera, ensuring

that the strap is not twisted anywhere in between. Then, the free end must be made to pass through the top end of the buckle downwards. This creates a double loop, providing a safeguard against slipping. At this point, the loop around the buckle must face outward, and the free end of the strap inward.

#### Leave No Loose Ends

Once the strap is buckled, tuck the free end of the strap inside the buckle and tug from both sides, securing it in position. Leaving loose ends can be very inconvenient, and also result in the strap slipping off the buckle.



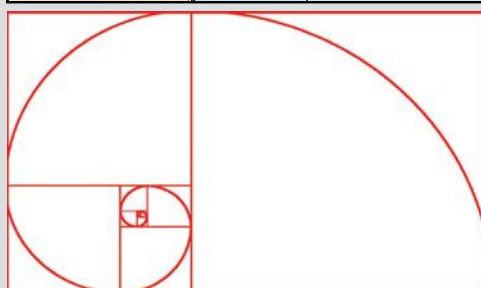
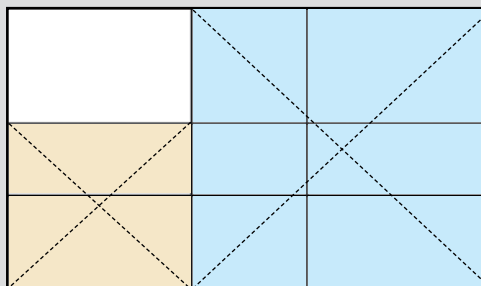


## The Da Vinci Connection

What is the Phi Grid?

**Sahil Jalan**, *Kharagpur, via email*

The Phi Grid is a variant of the Rule of Thirds. While the latter divides the frame into nine equally sized rectangles, the Phi Grid does so in the ratio 1:0.618:1. This ratio is also called the golden ratio (1.618:1), and is approximately equal to the aspect ratio of a full-frame sensor. The resulting gridlines intersect at points (called sweet spots) closer to each other than in the Rule of Thirds. Each of the sweet spots forms the vertex of a golden rectangle, with one vertex of the frame at the diagonally opposite end. It can be divided into square regions whose vertices form a spiral. This provides a plethora of sweet spots while shooting landscapes. Aligning the subjects along either of the vertical gridlines also places them within a golden rectangle towards one side of the frame—making it ideal for landscapes where the subjects lie close to the centre of the frame.



➔ The Phi Grid (top) might be tough to visualise on the viewfinder, but it is aesthetically more intricate and pleasing, like composing along a Fibonacci Spiral (bottom).

### BRIEFLY

#### How are GIFs created?

The Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) is an image format that has become widely popular for its use to create short animation effects. It makes use of a fast compression algorithm known as the LZW, to store multiple images in one file. When opened, the multiple images create an animated effect, for a few seconds. Loading the file once is sufficient for the animation to play in a loop.

## Steadying the Camera

My work involves a lot of hand-held shooting. How do I minimise unwanted camera shake?

**Suman Chattopadhyay**, *Kolkata, via email*

Photojournalists encounter this problem quite often, though it can be resolved by simple means. Holding the camera close to one's body provides a cushion against camera shake. Lowering the centre of gravity by standing with your legs considerably apart also reduces the likelihood of unwanted perturbation. The photographer's posture is crucial, and care must be taken to prop the elbows to avoid camera shake. Breath control also helps in this regard. Using a bean bag or a monopod allows the photographer to change the position of the camera effortlessly while shooting outdoors.

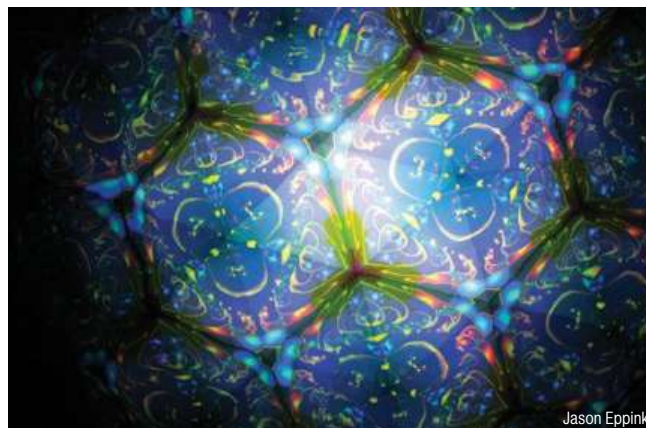


## Inside a Kaleidoscope

I like taking photographs of the inside of a children's kaleidoscope, but I have been facing issues with lighting and fading.

What measures can be taken to resolve such problems?

**Mallika Khanna**, *New Delhi, via email*



Jason Eppink

The easiest way to create to photograph the inside of a kaleidoscope, you can use a cellphone or a compact camera, as the diameter of the lens barrel is small enough to fit the eyepiece. Even then, vignetting may occur because light inside the kaleidoscope undergoes multiple reflections, decreasing in intensity every time. This can usually be fixed using an editing software. In order to produce sharper images without fading, consider mounting the kaleidoscope on a tripod. This helps in shooting at handheld ISO speeds.

➔ In this photograph of the inside of a kaleidoscope, the pattern is the brightest at the centre, and fades gradually. Vignetting can be observed at the edges.

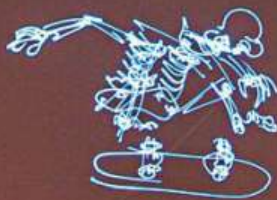


# ShowCase



## Darren Pearson

- He is a photographer from Los Angeles, USA, who first came into the limelight for his *Light Fossils* series.
- He was recently awarded a Photokina Special Prize for his light painting work. He will be exhibited at Photokina next year.
- He likes listening to music by artists like Tame Impala, Nathaniel Rateliff and Zhu.



Darren is extremely passionate about skateboarding, something that reflects prominently in his light painting series.



GREAT MASTERS

**Kishor Parekh**

The revolutionary of  
Indian photojournalism

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PHOTOFEATURE

**Indrajit Khambe**  
tells the story of the  
miracle of birth

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YOUR PICTURES

Our readers send us  
their interpretations  
of the 'Abstract' theme

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# The Light Painter

There is more than one way to tell a compelling story. **Supriya Joshi** has a conversation with **Darren Pearson** about the worlds that he creates by painting with light.

**S**ometimes you wonder about the existence of alternate universes, one where dinosaurs still walk the planet, aliens visit earth and human skeletons show off their amazing skateboarding skills. Los Angeles based photographer Darren Pearson doesn't need to wonder about these parallel universes, because he is too busy

creating them. With a repertoire of light painting work that is as nuanced as it is fun, Darren has established himself as one of the most creative photographers around.

## **It Began With a Centaur**

Darren's introduction to light painting happened when he came across a picture by *LIFE* photographer Gjon Mili. "He had ▶





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⌚ Darren's colourful creations juxtapose brilliantly against the desolate environments he prefers to shoot in.

made a photograph of the legendary Pablo Picasso sketching with light. The photo is called *Picasso Draws a Centaur*, and it immediately struck a chord with me. I asked a photographer friend about the technique and he told me about light painting. It was like I had discovered magic," he said.

Since then, Darren has been perfecting his own light painting technique and capturing surreal subjects like dinosaur fossils, angels, skeletons and aliens.

### Delving in Intricacies

One would imagine that such photographs require a lot of planning. "It usually

⌚ Darren's light painted creations often find themselves in improbable situations, much to the amusement of the viewers.



### GADGETS & GEAR

- Darren uses a Canon EOS 60D to shoot, along with Canon EF 24–70mm f/2.8L II USM and Rokinon 14mm f/2.8 IF ED UMC lenses.
- He also uses the Manfrotto 190x tripod, a wireless remote as well as a Night-Writer, which is a light-pen tool that he developed himself.



**“I would love to light paint in India. There are many wonders that I have not seen yet. It would be an adventure!”**

📸 Regardless of the fact that he creates ghoulish subjects, there is a certain whimsy attached to the skeletons Darren captures.



The real and the imaginary merge together fascinatingly in Pearson's work.

takes five to eight minutes to create a light painting,” he said. “But before that, you have to do a bit of research—what is the sky going to look like? Is there a full moon out? Another tip is to look at satellite view in maps for the areas you can drive to and ones that look geologically fascinating,” he said. “I also recommend showing up before it’s dark—watch the sunset if

possible, scout for locations while visibility is good and mark a few spots for the night. Once night falls, I usually have a good idea for what to do, and I begin the process of illustrating scenes.”

### Telling a Story

Even though it is his light painting creations that are the centre of attention ▶

### TIPS BY DARREN

- The most exciting thing about light painting is that you don’t have to limit yourself to subjects that reflect reality. Let your imagination run wild and bring your fantasy world to reality.
- You don’t need expensive gear to shoot such images. You can even use your cellphone with apps like LightBomber, Slow Shutter and Night Cap.







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For elaborate frames with exposure discrepancies, he makes a composite with two shots, one for the light art, one for the scene.

in his photographs, the backgrounds that they are set up against also give them a lot of character. "I try to look for interesting patterns in nature and try and shoot at places of historical interest, which have a

great story already. I try to draw from the energy of the location and illustrate what might fit within the scene and interact with it whenever possible," he said. His next shoot location is throughout

**"Developing my own LED light painting tool has certainly added a new perspective for me towards the art. You always have to push the boundaries."**



Darren's skeletal creations are like sentient beings, and they look completely at home in normal situations.






According to him, light painting is an ultimate release of imagination, where one does not have to be bound by rules and conventions.


the American Southwest—Arizona, New Mexico and Utah—which are abundant in colourful desert locations and unique rock formations.

### The Next Step

Darren is now working on a series of light painted food, which he hilariously calls *Light on Calories*. Plus, he has also developed his own range of LED lights, for light painting.

“I wanted a battery-powered stylus with an LED at the tip, but they didn’t exist! So I decided to just make one for myself. After many requests, I have now started selling them,” he said. Darren’s quest for luminescent perfection is a true testament to the spirit of creative pursuit. 

To see more from Darren, visit [facebook.com/thedariustwin](https://facebook.com/thedariustwin) and Instagram [@dariustwin](https://instagram.com/dariustwin)

 Darren always seems to be pushing the boundaries of imagination, craft and art, in creating his own distinct voice.





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# THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Regd No D144

New Delhi Tuesday October 3 1967

Eighteen paise



## First close-up of Chinese on Nathu La ridge

The picture alongside was taken at Nathu La, 14,200 ft. above sea level and 35 miles away from Gangtok.

The Press party drove from Gangtok early in the morning of Sept. 29 and found the pass clear of fog despite the army authorities' fear that the weather might not be suitable for the journey.

Chinese loud-speakers were blaring forth as the party reached the ridge on which Indian and Chinese soldiers are face to face across a barbed wire fence. In the distance a group of Chinese was busy repairing their damaged bunkers. As our photographer started focussing his camera, two Chinese cameramen came right up to the fence to "shoot" the Indian party, which however was stopped about 20 yards away. Both sides took "shots."

Meanwhile, the Chinese Commander in command of the area popped up with some soldiers flanking him.

Our photographer had no more than three minutes in which to take his pictures. His vantage point was the inscribed stone commemorating the late Mr Nehru's journey through the pass in 1958.

Other photographs by Kishor Parekh on back page.



Chinese eyes on 15,000-ft-high pass; Cho La clash details



(1930-1982)

# Kishor Parekh

➤ Parekh's photos were revolutionary, as was the way they were published, due to his crusades.

Raj Lalwani sifts through the tearsheets of history to look back at the work of Kishor Parekh, undoubtedly, the revolutionary of photojournalism in India.

**N**ews photography in India can be divided into two eras: the pre-Kishor Parekh phase, and the redefining of the medium that followed his resounding influence. That is why it's a bit of a disservice that his legacy, for younger generations like mine, is most identified with his Bangladesh work that only happened a few years later. His powerful chronicling of the birth of that nation through relentless, gut-wrenching photos of the war may be one of the most important documents of Indian history, but in terms of photojournalism, Bangladesh was his swansong, not his watershed moment.

"Photographers should erect a statue for Parekh," said N Thiagarajan, another icon of Indian photography, "he came to India and completely changed the style of news photography. But it wasn't easy. He fought for it."

**"The plotted fiction pales beside the honesty and directness of the good documentary."**

## Revolutionising the News Scape

Through his academic studies in USA, he armed himself with the knowledge of contemporary photographic practices worldwide and in turn, went on to introduce the concept of hitherto unseen full-page photo stories in the Indian media. It was he, who through his crusades, introduced Indian photojournalism to multi-column pictures and the use of 35mm. Until then, news photography was largely about manufactured photo ops and ribbon cuttings shot with the more restrictive TLR, but it was Parekh's aggressive sense for storytelling, that drove him to use the 35mm format, starting with rangefinders and moving on to Nikon SLRs. "Running into the eye of the storm was his style," recalls Pablo Bartholomew, who assisted Kishor occasionally in his teenage years.

Kishor Parekh's iconic images are powerful, poignant, potent and yet



# THE LAST PICTURE

By our Staff Correspondent

New Delhi, Jan. 11—The last journalist to see and photograph Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri in Tashkent before his death was Kishore Parekh of the Hindustan Times. Here is his account of the meeting:

At about 10-30 p.m. I knocked on the door of Mr Shastri's room

in the villa where he was staying

Mr Shastri invited me to come in. The late Prime Minister, who had evidently not eaten much at the banquet that evening, was having a light pudding.

Mr Shastri asked me what I wanted and told me that after he had finished the sweet dish I could

do what I liked.

I requested Mr Shastri to tell the security guards to let me wait outside so that I could take a picture of him from the window. Mr Shastri acceded to my request.

Soon after he had finished eating, Mr Shastri took his customary walk. This is how this picture was taken."



➤ "A mix of Prince Henry tobacco from his perpetual companion, the pipe and musky Tabac cologne, I remember my stylish father by that fragrance. Whatever he did, he did with all heart. I believe it was this sheer indulgence of life that blended into oneness, each time he pulled the trigger of his beloved Nikon," says son and photographer Swapan Parekh on the memories of his dad.

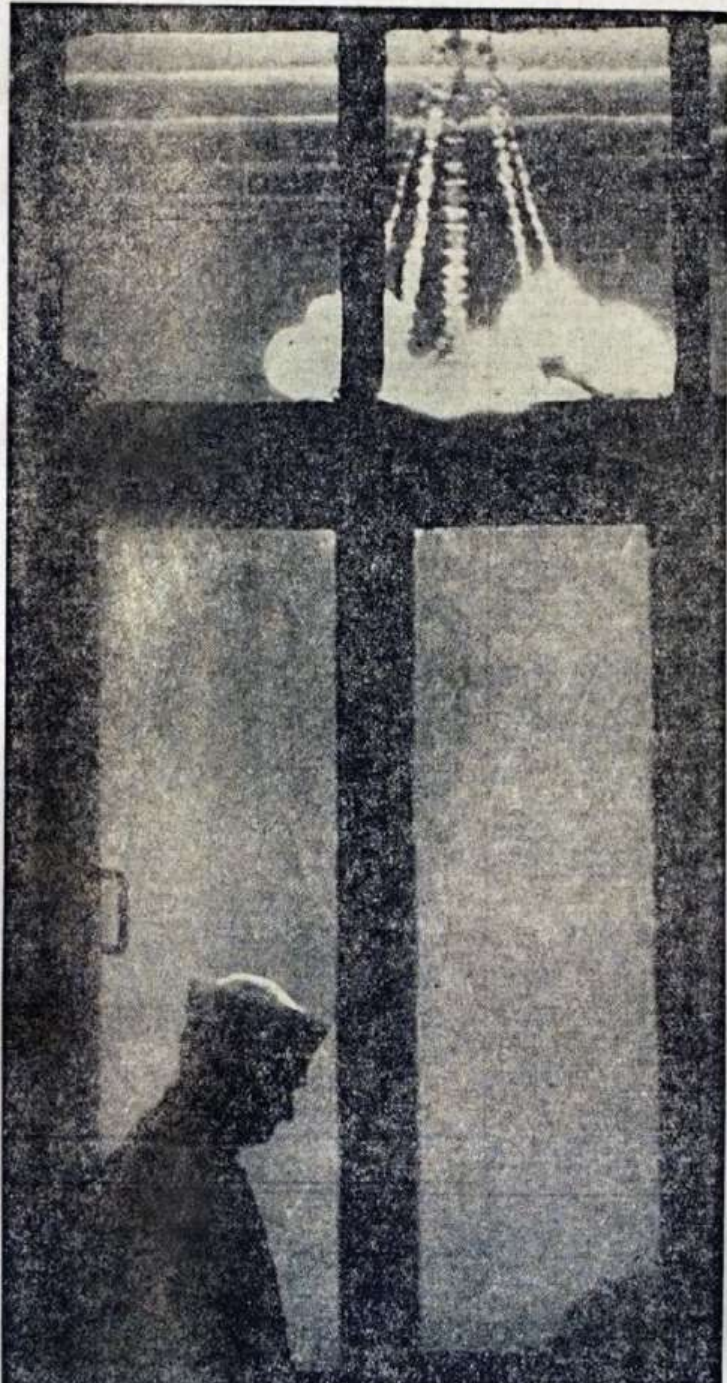
the photographers he admired, like Eugene Smith, Margaret Bourke-White and Henri Cartier-Bresson, the work of whom he had analysed in his thesis during college.

His way of seeing and foresight in moulding the reportage landscape (reflected even during his pathbreaking commercial career in the 70s) can probably be traced to the fact that he was the only photojournalist of his time to have a Master's degree in cinema and documentary photography. This was in addition to an internship at *LIFE* magazine that he had won (as an award in a photo competition organised by the publication. Parekh had won an unprecedented six categories out of seven).

## Photo Essays, Credit Lines: A First for India

What's remarkable is that these tectonic shifts took place over a mere six-year period, between 1961-67, when he worked at *The Hindustan Times* as the Chief Photographer. Such was his colossal presence that he had a radical impact from the very onset, introducing full-page photo essays and ensuring that photographers are given credit lines. Never before had a photographer so altered the visual landscape of newsprint in India. It was after being inspired by Parekh's battles that S Paul fought for the same in his publication, *The Indian Express*.

Parekh and Paul were the two heavyweights of Indian photography in the early 60s, and also inseparable friends. "Greatest photographer, greatest human, greatest friend," says Paul, reminiscing about Kishore Parekh. "*Bahut pyara aadmi tha*. Transparent like a *sheesha*, and honest. Whatever was inside would reflect on the outside. It would show ▶

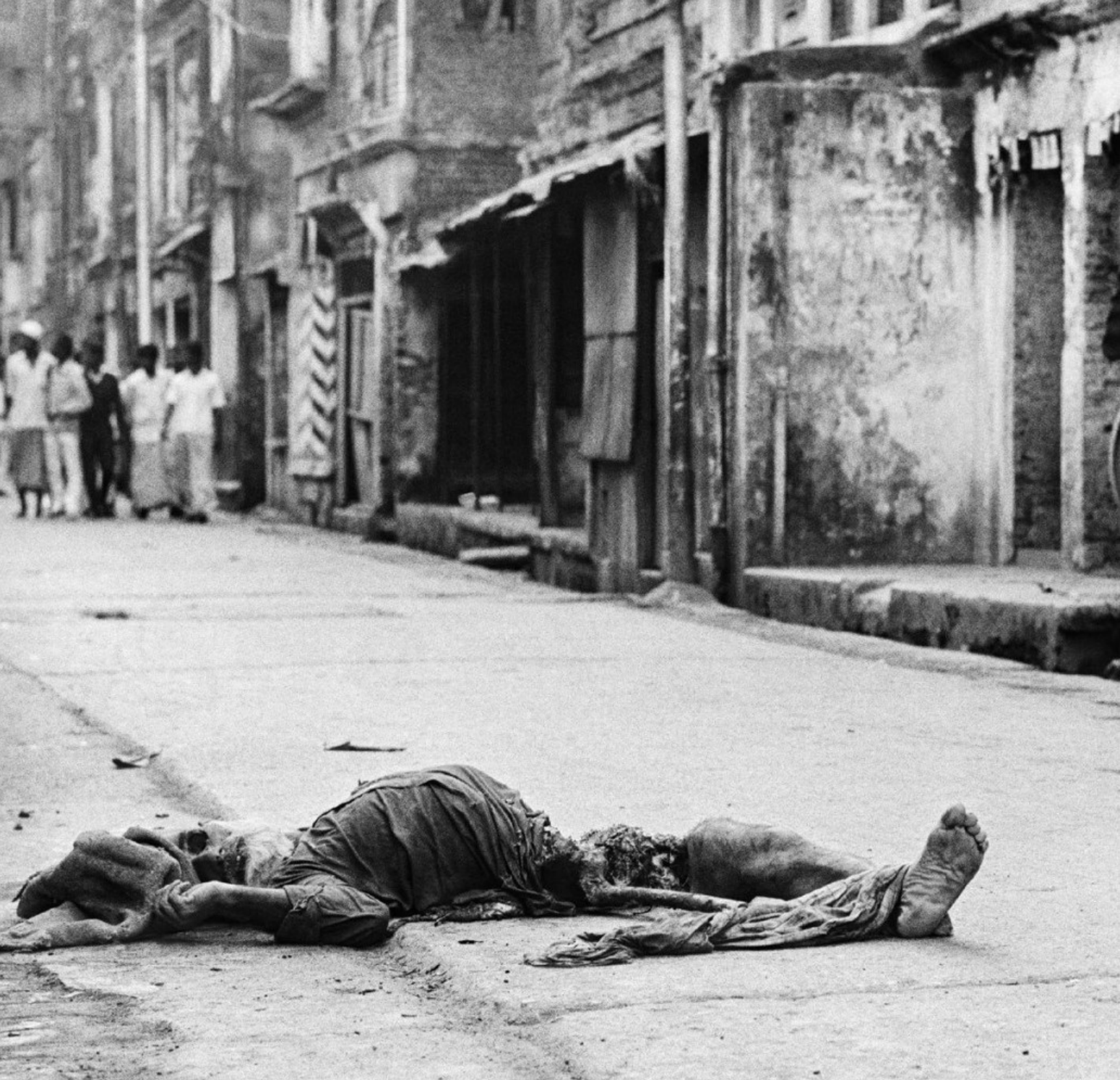


➤ Parekh was the only photographer to have made this iconic photo in Tashkent, on the night that the then-Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri passed away.

compassionate, to the point of being historically perpetual in their recall. "Photographs should be full of untarnished facts", he would say. And yet, he always managed to marry the factual with his potent artistic rendition, much in the tradition of

**"The whole human life in its entirety fills me with a poetic fascination."**





**“The human subject knows neither rest nor sameness. Instead, it presents a shifting tide of expressions in look or gesture. Nothing is ever repeated.”**

through his eyes. He had eyes that could attract anybody. And those eyes showed that he was a great artist.”

It's one of the more memorable tales of photo history when Parekh had invited Paul and his brother Raghu Rai to his home. After a few drinks, Paul vomited, leading to Kishor Parekh taking him to a hospital. The next morning, when Parekh went to the hospital, he asked Paul, “*Kyun, ladka hua ya ladki?*” Inimitably mischievous, he had admitted Paul to a maternity hospital.

It is a similarly playful line that I keep coming back to, while traversing through the various stories around Kishor. “Photo essay

is a group effort of all the photographs,” he had once written. The quote, not as poignant as his erudite thoughts on the human condition, but in all its humour, portrays his thoughts on photography—nuanced, direct and no-nonsense.

***“If I cannot record the significant deepness of the human race through my camera, what is the use of my medium?”***

In 1971, when war broke out between India and Pakistan, Parekh wasn't an active news photographer in India anymore, having relocated to Hong Kong, as a

➤ **“Once 50,000 people had lived here. Now there were only 200. The rest have fled, leaving the dead on the streets, to the scavenging dogs and the stricken eye of the passer-by.”**





Picture Editor for a prestigious group of magazines. During a trip to the beach with his wife Saroj, he expressed his restlessness. "My country is burning and here I am, in Hong Kong, painting," he said.

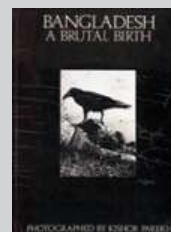
**The following text is an excerpt from the writings of Swapan Parekh on his father's Bangladesh work:**

His insides told him he wanted to be there in his country shooting the breaking story, even though the magazines that he represented were not news-based. Against all odds, on his own initiation, not even letting the emotions for his wife and

four kids come in the way, he took the first flight out of Hong Kong. Kishor was not part of any Press troupe nor did he have any accreditation. With a limited stock of Tri-X, he reached the border near Kolkata from the Indian side, borrowing a ride in a friend's car. Getting off and carrying on by foot, he forced his way through a restricted cordon and actually jumped into an army helicopter carrying an 'official' press troupe to Dhaka.

The Major responsible for the troupe, though aware of Parekh's reputation, refused to leave with him on board as he did not have the mandatory clearances. "Shoot me here right now or take me" was Parekh's stubborn, gutsy resistance. In the ensuing rebuttal, the Major eventually blinked and caved in to his doggedness. He probably saw purpose in Kishor's fiery eyes and succumbed into taking him, on the condition that he was no one's responsibility, once he was in the war zone. ▶

### History at Delhi Photo Festival



Parekh's Bangladesh work has been painstakingly restored by his son and will be on view at the Delhi Photo Festival, along with a reproduction of the rare-to-view book (IGNCA, 30 Oct–8 Nov). It will be the first ever time that this work is being shown in India after Parekh's death in 1982.



"Widows suffered their private grief, while the statesmen talked and bargained."

**“Documentary is an approach, not a technique.”**

**“All I Can Smell is Rotten Flesh...”**

Within the ensuing 5–6 days, he created what is now photojournalism history, and that too with a mere fifty rolls of film. The equivalent amount of frames that many photographers of today would probably be running through an afternoon.

With economy of raw stock, coupled with a clarity of vision, Parekh realised he was onto something bigger. Not satisfied with just ‘covering’ the war, he immediately rushed back to Hong Kong and spent Christmas week working day and night in the darkroom, to put together a dummy of his work at lightning speed.

“All I can smell is rotten flesh...” a visibly leaner Kishor exclaimed as he held the dummy, having shed 15 pounds due to a complete loss of appetite from his recent ordeal. But in his hand, he was holding history, and what was the soon-to-be-

⚡ “His young body torn up in several places by a Pakistani shell, a jawan of the Madras regiment is patched up by comrades at a makeshift aid station on the road to Dacca.”



born book, *Bangladesh—A Brutal Birth*. He rushed back to India and shared his dummy with the Foreign Secretary’s office. The government, stunned by the powerful images, readily agreed to order the entire print run of 20,000 copies and made it the official document of the war.

Bound in its spine were pictures that have gone on to become icons of Bangladesh’s liberation movement. Pictures that, to date, are spoken of, for not just their photographic finesse but also their extreme

⚡ “In a street of horror in the old quarter of the city, I saw Mukti Bahini guerrillas hunting snipers. Entering the houses, the men fought silently in dark rooms.”




All captions by Kishor Parekh, from the book *Bangladesh—A Brutal Birth*.

emotional content and power to move. The book's rarity can be gauged by the fact that even Kishor's family possesses only two copies. The privileged others, who managed to procure a copy, hold on to it like a prized artifact.

#### **In Horror and Beauty, Life and Death**

In 1982, Kishor Parekh passed away at the Valley of Flowers, where he was working on what would have been his third book. Legend has it that he exclaimed to a friend

the day before his death, that the place they were at was so beautiful that it would be the ideal place to breath one's last. A man who chronicled the horrors of war, famine and death almost preempted his own... as that massive heart attack battled him, he calmly kept his Nikon F2 on the ground. Much like an ode to the sensitivity with which he told the story of his times, the last photograph in that F2 was a picture of a flower. Live, love, experience. That's how Kishor lived. And that's how Kishor died." 

**“Those who live, love and experience art cannot always communicate their art in mere statements.”**



# 1000 Words

A selection of some of the best images from the Indian mainstream media

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Aadesh Choudhari,  
DNA

## Rising to the Heavens

This scene, shot at a local fair in Bandra, Mumbai, because of the angle and the surreal soap bubbles, is reminiscent of Jesus' resurrection, thus giving the photograph a celestial effect.







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## An Unfortunate Chain Reaction

On 19 September, a police officer created a ruckus outside a GPO in Lucknow, by breaking a street vendor's typewriter. The gutsy photojournalist's documentation of a defiant oppressor, makes this a powerful image, which has actually impacted change.

Ashutosh Tripathi,  
Dainik Bhaskar

Fariha Farooqui,  
DNA

## A Hearty Interaction

Sri Mulyani Indrawati, Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer at the World Bank, is seen interacting with women commuters in a local train in Mumbai. The unsteady nature of the frame due to the hand, and her candid expression make this a fresh take on portraiture and reportage.



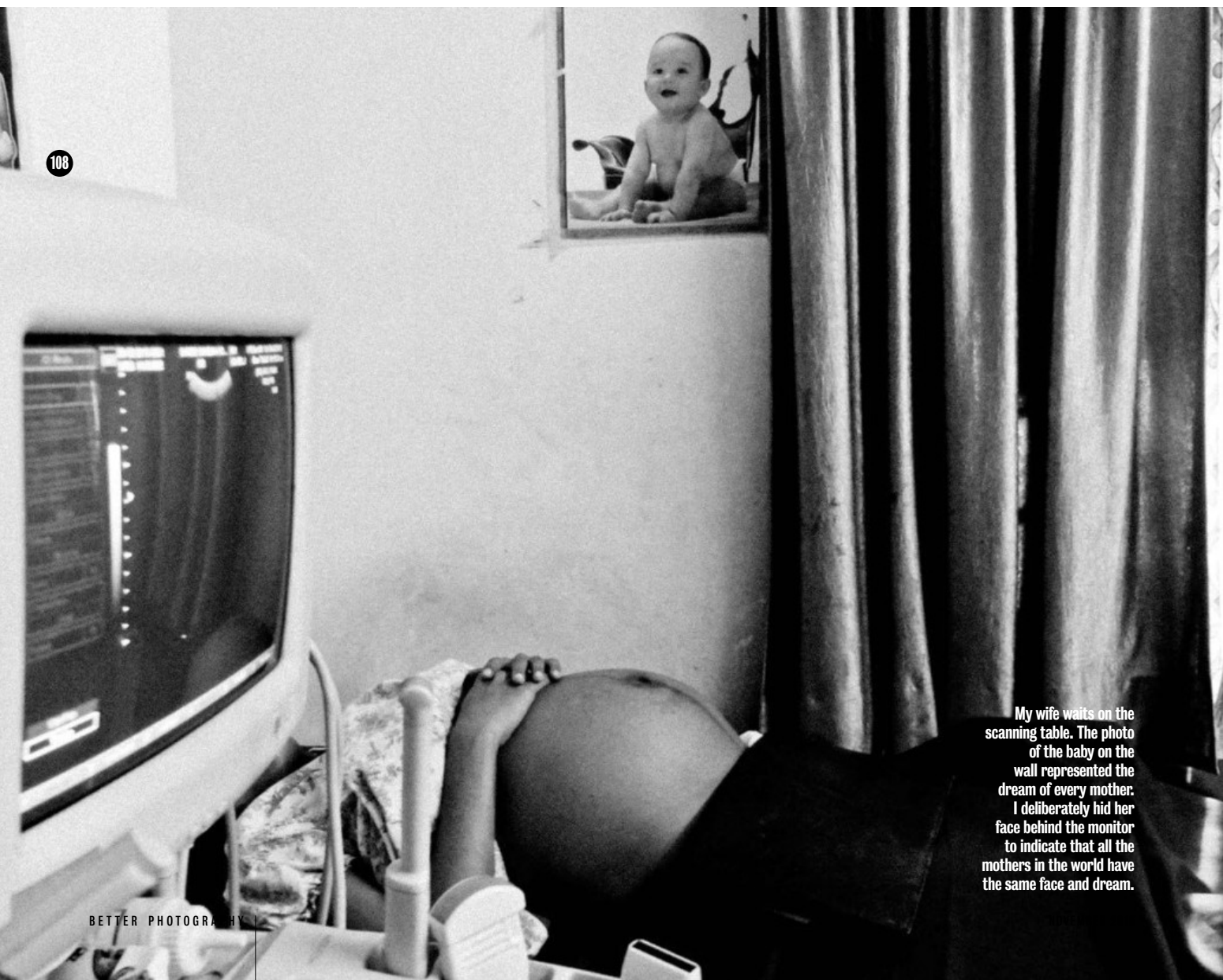
## PHOTO FEATURE



**Indrajit Khambe** is a computer technician from Kankavli, Sindhudurg. He has been making images since the last three years, influenced by icons like Josef Koudelka and closer home, Pablo Bartholomew.

# Finding Light, Life and Love in 35 Days

Like a rising crescendo, Indrajit Khambe's images of his wife's difficult delivery tell you the story of the miracle of birth.



My wife waits on the scanning table. The photo of the baby on the wall represented the dream of every mother. I deliberately hid her face behind the monitor to indicate that all the mothers in the world have the same face and dream.





⌚ This was the first day of my wife's hospitalisation. There is a solemnness in her eyes, which seemed like a scary precursor to what lied ahead.

⌚ Several moments of quietude interspersed with the more intense moments. It was important for me to capture it all, because without the gentler moments, the story would not seem so real.

Everything was going smoothly with my wife's pregnancy term, until she reached the end of the sixth month. A medical checkup reported that the water in her womb had drained, and she would have to go through immediate treatment to deposit water externally in her womb.

This treatment occurred three times during the next two months. I ended up spending 35 days in the hospital with my wife and my five-year-old daughter Saeed. It was then that I decided to document this process, right up to the point where my



wife would eventually go into labour and deliver the baby.

Carrying a DSLR in such a cramped space became cumbersome, so I shot the photos with my Fujifilm X20. Those days were really testing on all of us, and yet I found that making pictures of the process became my way to keep our sanity intact. Capturing these moments of ordeal became my way of keeping calm for my wife. We were blessed with a healthy baby on 3 March 2015. These photos will always make us remember.

— As told to Supriya Joshi

⌚ Sometimes it was hard to capture intense moments, because I failed to detach myself emotionally from watching my wife's pain.









### Documenting the Highs and Lows of Family Life

- Let your camera be an extension of your eye, and not an intrusive medium, when photographing your family.
- Your family is yours, and no one can be as close to them or understand them like you do. Be honest with the story you are telling and let it be a means for self expression. The more honest you are, the more impactful your story will be.
- Create short-term and long-term projects. For instance, you may be going for a trip or a gathering. Smaller sets of photos can come together beautifully while collating larger projects.

➤ Here, my wife reaches out to touch our new born baby boy. The sense of calm and relief is almost palpable.

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My daughter watches over her new brother, as my wife takes a breather. It astounded me how in a single frame, my family was complete.



➤ The miracle of life... there is no truer joy than watching a human life come into existence, specially one that you have helped create. These images are now precious heirlooms for my family. And once my baby boy is grown up, he can truly understand how he came into being.



# Your Pictures

This month through the theme 'The Abstract' we challenged our readers to explore the realm of the metaphysical. These are the best images from the contest.

Winner



112



**Digitek**  
A trusted name in  
Li-Ion Batteries  
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& Studio  
Accessories

**DSF-400Pro Plus  
Wireless Studio Light**  
Inside No. **56**  
**600** Watt  
Can Work with 40 & 60 Bulbs

**Wireless eTTL/iTTL Transceiver**  
High Speed Sync **1/8000s**  
**iTTL/eTTL** Flash  
**2.4G** Wireless Remote

**LED Video Light LED-D600**  
Brightness Adjustment  
Battery Power Test  
**16:9** Wide Screen

**Flash Speedlite DFL-1000T**  
**58** ISO 100  
Lithium Battery  
TTL For Canon / Nikon

**LCD Monitor DLM-007**  
**7" inch** Flip-On  
Pan & Tilt Function  
HDMI Input & Output with 4K Jacks & 400 Lines  
For DSLR & Video Camera's  
2.8" Angle Adjustment, Shock Adapters, Standard & Slow



### ← A Delicate Pattern

Sirsendu Gayen, Kolkata

"I was shooting at the Mirza Ghalib Street fish market in Kolkata when I came across these colourful fishes for sale. As these small fishes swirled around in the tank, they created a dreamy pattern with colourful abstractions. It made me wonder about their fragile lifespan."

**Camera:** Nikon D80

**Lens:** Tokina AT-X Pro SD  
12-24mm f/4 (IF) DX

**Aperture:** f/22

**Shutterspeed:** 1/8sec

**ISO:** 100

Participate in the  
'Your Pictures Contest' on  
betterphotography.in/contests  
to win a chance to be  
featured in the magazine and  
win exciting prizes!

## Honourable Mention

### Finding the Light

Aakash Contractor,  
Vadodara

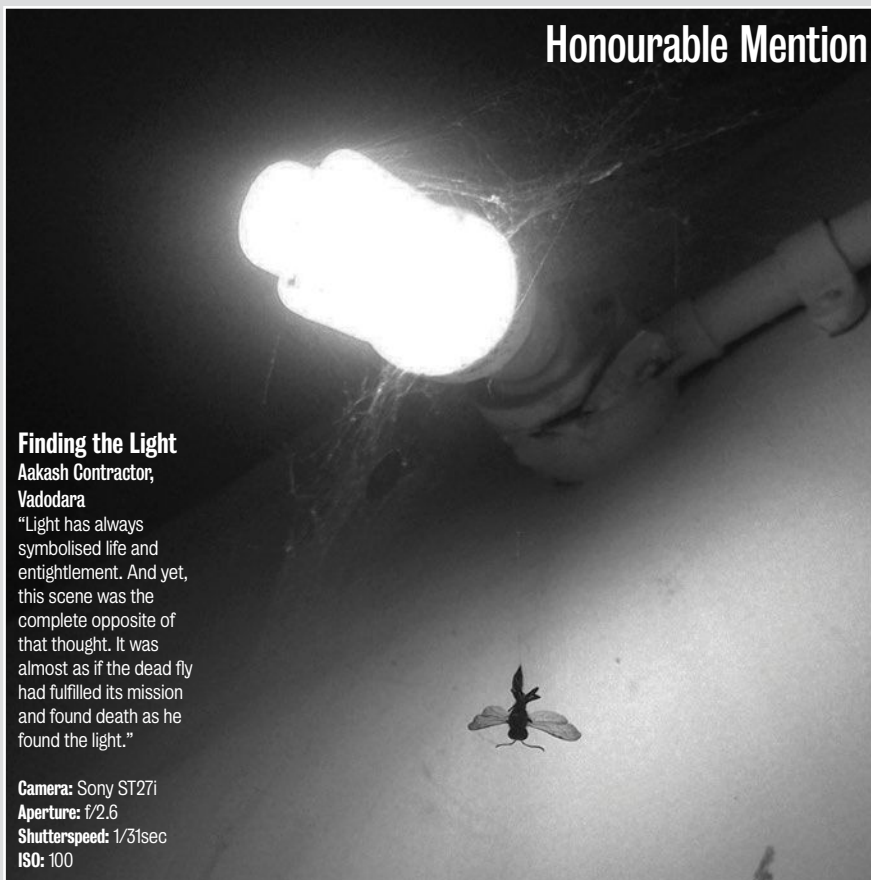
"Light has always symbolised life and enlightenment. And yet, this scene was the complete opposite of that thought. It was almost as if the dead fly had fulfilled its mission and found death as he found the light."

**Camera:** Sony ST27i

**Aperture:** f/2.6

**Shutterspeed:** 1/31sec

**ISO:** 100





## Honourable Mention



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**➔ Reaching Out****Jayesh Kothari, Thane**

"If you look close enough, you will begin to find sense and meaning in everything you see. During a recent visit to the beach, I observed the patterns left behind on the sand by the sea. It looked like branches of trees, reaching out to the beyond."

**Camera:** Canon EOS 5D Mark II

**Lens:** Canon EF 24–105mm f/4 L IS USM

**Aperture:** f/8

**Shutterspeed:** 1/10sec

**ISO:** 50



## Honourable Mention

### Soaring High

Sanghamitra Ghosh, Kolkata

"I was looking up at the sky to witness this amazing moment unfold before me. A flock of pigeons had just taken off, and it looked like they were reclaiming the sky as their own. The pigeons looked like a cluster of stars, and I later postprocessed the image to achieve that idea."

Camera: Canon EOS 1100D

Lens: Canon EF-S

18–55mm f/3.5–5.6 IS II

Aperture: f/6.3

Shutterspeed: 1/500sec

ISO: 100

### Serenity

Debmalya Ray Choudhuri, Kolkata

"An abstract photo for me has more to do with establishing deeper emotional connect and portraying the state of mind of an individual who made it. This long exposure image conveyed the serenity I felt in the moment."

Camera: Nikon D5100

Lens: Nikkor 18–105mm

f/3.5–5.6G ED VR

Aperture: f/22

Shutterspeed: 1/20sec

ISO: 200



## Honourable Mention





**Photograph by:**  
Dwight Hooker/Playboy  
**Image Source:**  
Wikimedia Commons

## Playboy's Tryst with the Imaging Community

**S**ome photographs attain iconic status by sheer chance. This image is a cropped version of a nude photograph of Lena Söderberg, shot by Dwight Hooker, for the November 1972 issue of *Playboy*. The Swedish model was 21 when she featured on the centrefold as the 'Playmate of the Month'. That issue, with a print run of 71,61,561, remains *Playboy's* best-selling edition to this day. The image catapulted to international fame in an unusual fashion over the years. In July 1973, Alexander Sawchuk, then an Assistant Professor of Electrical Engineering at the Signal and Image Processing Institute of the University of Southern Carolina, was searching for a photograph to test one of his colleague's algorithms. The researcher had, by then, exhausted his stock of standard test images, and wanted something new. Legend has it that he chanced upon the aforementioned issue of the magazine.

Lena's photograph wasn't the first *Playboy* centrefold to be used for this purpose. An image of Teddi Smith, 'Playmate of the Month' of *Playboy's* July 1960 issue, had earlier been used in a Master's thesis involving digital image transmission. Lena's portrait, however, stood the test of time and remains a widely popular standard test image. With an astounding amount of detail within regions that are glossy, shaded, textured, and flat, it is a preferred test image for a wide range of image compression algorithms. While the rich tone of the model's skin makes it suitable for adding and testing for artifacts, her sharp features present adequate variation in contrast.

A poem titled *A Sonnet for Lena*, by Thomas Colthurst, describes the desirability of the photograph as an ideal test image. The image has also inspired several elements of popular culture. It features in Woody Allen's 1973 science-fiction comedy *Sleeper*, when a cryogenically preserved character in a futuristic world selects the centrefold from among 200 artefacts of the 20th century.

The use of the image for academic purposes has also drawn some criticism. It has been alleged that the magazine indulges in the degradation of women by portraying them as sexual objects, and thus, the use of such a photograph in a male-dominated academia is counterproductive to the idea of gender equality. **BP**